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# Short Stories.

No. 743.] Week ending March 28, 1903. [Price One Penny.

Flinging one arm as far as she dared along the body of the stone dog, she dragged her own body forward towards the gargoyle's mouth. So much depended on her getting the letter! Would she be able to reach it?

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(A Dramatic Incident from our Story, "FOR HIS SAKE." See page 391.)

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# Short Stories.

No. 743.] Week Ending March 28th, 1903. [One Penny.

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By R. NORMAN SILVER.

*Author of "The Golden Dwarf," "A Daughter of Mystery," etc.*

THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

Moira Davenal is sitting in the little cottage on Groudle Quay busy with her ribbon work. Sir Guy Vanbrugh is talking to her.

"Moira, I love you so much," he says. "Won't you——"

He pauses. There is a heavy step in the hallway of the cottage, and a burly figure enters the room.

"Good evening, Mr. Davenal. I'm off to London for the week-end and was just leaving a message for you with your daughter. How goes on the task of raising the *Sylph?*"

"I've found the last hole, Sir Guy," says John Davenal, who is a diver engaged in raising Sir Guy's yacht. "She'll soon be afloat."

After Sir Guy has gone a sailor appears at the door singing in drunken tones the scrap of a chorus:

"*Give my love to Nancy, the girl that I adore,*
*Tell her that she'll never see her—her sailor any more.*"

The diver rises to his feet.

"Hullo, Hartigan!" he remarks loudly. "Glad to see you. Come in and make yourself comfortable."

While Moira goes out on an errand a conversation takes place between the two men, from which it appears that Moira is really Hartigan's daughter.

The sailor—who is a ship's steward—sits back in his chair and begins to sing again the drunken chorus.

He halts abruptly, for the door slowly opens, and a blind woman comes in.

Dennis Hartigan recognises her as his sister Kate. She tells her brother that she heard the song he was singing—sung in just the same way—once when she was sitting on a breakwater at Groudle. She also adds that the man who was singing said, evidently to someone with him: "This is out far enough. In with it;" after which there was a splash.

Hannah Davenal (Hartigan's wife and the diver's sister) is maid to Lady Tarleton. She is possessed of a secret with which she continually blackmails her mistress.

One afternoon Lady Tarleton and Hannah Davenal go down to Groudle Tower, and together they make a mysterious journey at midnight.

Two mornings later Hannah is found dead in bed, a towel smelling of chloroform is on her face, and over that a pillow on which are some dirty finger marks.

The police are informed of the tragedy, and Detective-Sergeant Ussher is sent from Scotland Yard to investigate.

Edward Stormont, the owner of Groudle Tower, and Lady Tarleton's brother-in-law, now arrives at Groudle with his friend Paul Jerome, a war-correspondent, and the following day Irene Tarleton comes in response to her mother's summons.

Dennis Hartigan is arrested on suspicion of causing his wife's death, but is soon released. He has a mysterious conversation with Lady Tarleton regarding the whereabouts of a child.

"If—if the child were no longer in my path," Lady Tarleton murmurs, "I would give ten thousand pounds—to the man who told me so."

She hands Hartigan a note for one hundred pounds.

"Think it well over," she says.

"I will, my lady," Hartigan answers.

On his way back to Groudle Tower Hartigan encounters his sister Kate. She mentions the song he had sung. Hartigan's eyes flash. The brother and sister reach a level crossing and are part way over when Dennis sees a train rounding the curve. Loosing his hold of his sister's arm, he springs over the wooden flooring of the crossing, saying:

"Stand there, you are quite safe!"

The blind girl stands between the metals, extending her hands gropingly; the ground is shaken by the vibrations of the oncoming express.

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## NINTH CHAPTER.

### Two Meetings and a Crossing.

Nearer and nearer came the thundering black mass of the locomotive, the afternoon sunlight glinting on its polished fittings and on the windows of the long train that swung behind it round the curve which opened to the level crossing. And the blind girl, frozen with terror, stood in its path, between the shining "metals" of the down line, aghast, shuddering, helpless.

The whistle of the locomotive shrieked—shrieked wildly, fiercely, in note after note of almost human warning, and the brakes ground on the flying wheels. She had been seen—too late!

A moment more and the train had shot by, its speed lessening, and the reversed wheels of the engine biting desperately at the rails. The driver and fireman stared each at the other, a wan smile of relief struggling through the terror on their rough visages.

For a wonderful thing had happened. Plunging almost under the buffers of the advancing train, a man and a horse had skimmed the gate of the crossing, bird-like and low, as the swallow flies before rain. There had been the hollow rattle of iron hoofs on the wooden planks of the crossing—audible above the clatter and rumble of the slowing express—and then horse and man were over the further gate and in safety.

The rider had leant in mid-career to snatch at the blind girl. As his gallant mount took the second leap, he lifted his own burden across the saddle in front of him.

In the lane beyond he eased his horse. The girl lay still and white, she had lost consciousness; the horse steadied itself into a hand-gallop. He spoke to it soothingly and pulled it up; it had broken into a lather of sweat. Nor could he marvel, he had roused it from a walk to hurl it, with whip and heel, at the double leap. It was a staunch, "flea-bitten white"; no Park hack used to hurdles, but a peerless old hunter. Paul Jerome, in all his wanderings, had never thrown leg over a better bit of horseflesh.

"By Jingo!" he exclaimed, pausing in his saddle to look at the woman he had just rescued, "what a pretty creature! And swooned; I thought as much!"

He dismounted carefully, flung a rein over his arm and lifted his burden to the soft turf of the wayside. A sigh burst from Kate Hartigan's lips and she sat up with an effort. The war-correspondent saw that she was sightless, and a great pity moved him.

"Don't be alarmed," he said; "you were lingering a trifle too long on the crossing, and as the gates were shut I had to jump my horse over them and whisk you out of danger rather unceremoniously."

The blind girl sprang to her feet.

"Oh!" she cried, "where is Dennis, then? He must be killed, killed by the train. Dennis! Dennis!" she moaned.

She buried her face in her palms. Paul Jerome studied her.

"If you mean the person who was with you," he replied, with a singular harshness in his voice, "you may make yourself easy. Mr. Dennis got over in perfect safety. He is doubtless behind us. I galloped some distance down the lane before pulling up. May I ask," added the war-correspondent, "Mr. Dennis' other name, and if he is a relative or only a friend?"

The blind girl dried the tears that were hanging on her lashes. "He is my brother," she answered; "his name is Dennis Hartigan. I am Kate Hartigan and I live with Mr. Davenal and his daughter at Hawthorn Cottage."

The war-correspondent suppressed an exclamation, and regarded her with a new interest. As he hesitated, looking at her, a hoarse cough sounded behind him, and he turned, but not so quickly as did Kate Hartigan. The blind girl had already flung herself into the arms of a short, squarely, built person, whose blue serge garments and tanned skin were redolent of the sea. Dennis Hartigan had overtaken them.

"Dennis! Dennis!" cried his sister; "I thought you were killed. Why—oh, why, did you leave me?"

The ex-steward glanced irresolutely at the war-correspondent. Paul Jerome patted, with an abstracted air, the flank of his horse.

"I—I don't know, Kit," the blind girl was told; "you see, I sort of lost my head and made a bolt for it. I'm—I'm not used to trains, you see, being, as you may say, a seaman."

He put her by and stepped towards the war-correspondent. "I can't find any words to thank you, sir," he faltered; "if—if it hadn't been for you, Kit would have been dead by now. It was a wonderful jump of yours, to be sure."

Paul Jerome met the speaker with a full and searching gaze. The ex-steward started. He had only just recognised the blind girl's rescuer.

"Not mine," he said coolly, "but this good brute's. Lucky for you, Mr.—Mr. Hartigan, that Mr. Stormont suggested my making the acquaintance of his old hunter. If I had been on a common hack, your unfortunate lack of presence of mind might have had very serious consequences."

The ex-steward's tan grew a shade less deep. "Losing your nerve's a queer thing, sir," he replied evasively; "but it's a mercy Kit's not a penny the worse. Poor lass, she's a bit flustered, though, and with many thanks to you, sir, I'll get her home."

He slipped his arm through his sister's. But the blind gir disengaged herself, an expression of disdain had flitted over her face.

"I'm quite well," she said petulantly; "besides, I told you not to come by the crossing, Dennis. And the train wasn't all that near us when you got frightened. It's very strange, I didn't think men ever got frightened."

Dennis Hartigan muttered an oath; but Kit had slipped away, and was stretching out a hand towards the white hunter.

"I want to pat the horse that did the jumping," she continued, "though my heart was in my mouth when I felt him come all on top of me."

The war-correspondent guided her tremulous fingers; they stroked the tall withers.

"And now I should like to know who you are," said the blind girl; "your voice is quiet and kind—you must be very brave. Did the engine hurt you?"

"Not in the least," rejoined the war-correspondent, "thanks to old Buckshot here; he was one too many for the iron-horse. My name, at your service, is Paul Jerome."

Kate Hartigan said it over to herself. "Thank you, Mr. Jerome," she added; "I shall remember you all my life, I am glad there are *some* brave men in the world."

Paul Jerome laughed, but the sun-burnt countenance of the ex-steward was distorted by a sudden vicious sneer. He moved off sulkily, and Kate Hartigan followed him. The war-correspondent bade her good-bye, and, springing to the saddle, cantered down the lane.

When he drew level with Dennis Hartigan, he motioned to him. The ex-steward came reluctantly to his stirrup. The war-correspondent's face set sternly, and he bent from his saddle.

"Hartigan," he said, "we have met before—last night in the hall at Groudle Tower. As I gather, you have just escaped from the clutches of the law. Now I chanced to see the whole of what happened at the crossing yonder, and you are either a most appalling coward or——"

He stopped, tapped the ex-steward on the shoulder with his riding switch, and then pointed with the same article to the blind girl, who had paused on the earthen side-walk to put up her disordered locks.

"The caution may be unnecessary," concluded Paul Jerome,

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leaving his previous sentence ominously incomplete, "but f I were you, Mr. Hartigan, I would not let my sister come to any harm for the next little while. I shall not easily forget the way in which you abandoned her to her fate. Rather than panic it suggested, to my mind, *deliberation*."

The war-correspondent gathered up his reins. "A word to the wise," he added significantly, touched the white hunter with the whip, and trotted off without looking back.

At the head of the lane he met a couple of railway officials, hastening from the station hard by, to obtain some confirmation of the story that had been gasped out by the driver and fireman of the express. They stopped him politely and sought to question him. He put them off good-humouredly, minimised his exploit as much as might be, and rode back by the high-road to the Tower.

## TENTH CHAPTER.

### A Confession is Interrupted.

"I CAN'T lose her, I can't—Heaven knows I can't!"

John Davenal lifted his big, close-cropped head; it had been resting on his folded arms. The latter themselves were lying on the flap of an old-fashioned bureau, half chest of drawers, half writing-desk. The top drawer, pulled out and open, formed an escritoire, with pigeon-holes and smaller drawers at the back. All were filled with business and miscellaneous papers, laboriously folded and docketed; the diver was a methodical man.

The bureau stood by a polished bedstead of solid mahogany, turned and carved; its white sheets and chintz counterpane smelling of lavender. Fifty-year-old prints, in broad frames of light walnut, hung on the walls, in company with an elaborate sampler or two—scriptural subjects worked in coloured wools.

There were dimity hangings to the toilet-table, and muslin curtains with bright brass bars to the windows. One of the sashes was thrown up, the sea-air stole in, and the sound of the waves on the beach. The afternoon was far advanced and the tide was backing sleepily out, a sheet of shimmering, steely blue. John Davenal was alone with his thoughts.

The diver slid aside a flat, horizontal panel, and revealed a shallow well beneath. From it he took a small parcel and unfastened the pink ribbon that secured the packet. The contents were a tiny pair of soft red morocco shoes, a coral necklace, an ivory rattle with bells of thin silver, and a rippling golden curl like floss silk.

John Davenal gazed at them. "My little Moira," he murmured, his own broad dialect springing to his lips and making the words almost unrecognisable, save to a Cumbrian ear, "my pretty little lass! And thou wast a pretty little lass."

He fingered the eloquent trifles that lay before him. "The first pair of shoes I bought thee," he murmured; "the rattle thou'st forgotten long since, and the beads thou wast so proud of."

The diver brushed away a tear. "How I mind teaching her to call me daddy," he muttered huskily; "'twas a sweet lie on sweeter lips, and she took it for the truth."

He smote his great hand on the desk.

"But it's a lie!" he exclaimed; "a lie! I'm a childless man, trying to cheat Fate, and I can't do it. And she—she's a woman now, and her young heart's gone out like a bird to find its mate. I've lost her, lost her, that never was mine to keep."

John Davenal dashed his hand across his eyes, a girlish voice had floated up to him from below. It was Moira.

"Dad, dear," she called, "don't you want your tea?"

The diver went to the bedroom door and answered cheerfully in the affirmative. Then he returned to replace the pathetic mementoes in the well, closed and locked the panel, and descended.

Moira was putting a smart frilled silk cosy over the teapot that she had just filled from the steaming kettle on the hob, and there was a small pile of hot crumpets keeping hot before the fire. The slant afternoon sunbeams fell across the neat table from the window, the fresh green stalks and the blossoming flower-heads of the hyacinths on the board ledge basked in its rays.

The yellow glory shimmered on Moira's golden locks and made the delicate threads that would not be caught into her carefully-smoothed tresses like spun threads of the wandering precious metal. In a corner by the fire stood the tall frame with the panel of ribbon-work; the great spray of briar rose almost completed.

John Davenal moved heavily to his chair; the sight of the peaceful hearth and its dainty ministrant was unendurably bitter to him.

"Where's Kit?" he inquired. Moira shook her head as she set the crumpets on the table.

"I haven't an idea," he was told; "she went off somewhere a while ago. I said, 'Teatime soon, Kit'—you know, she hates to be asked where she's going, but she only said, 'Don't wait for me, there's a dear.' I expect she's going to pay some calls. Kit loves a gossip, and everyone is always glad to see her."

The diver wrinkled his brows. "Dear, dear," he exclaimed, "I'm not certain I wanted Kit to hear any gossip at the moment. You see, all Groudle will be talking about—about that business up at the Tower."

Moira poured him out a cup of tea and filled one for herself. "Oh, Kit isn't a child, dad," was her reassuring answer, "and I daresay people will be sensible and not talk about it too much."

John Davenal stirred his tea and gazed down into the mimic whirlpool produced by the spoon.

"Groudle folk," he retorted, "are magpies to talk and owls to think." There was a flash of irritation in the remark. "Perhaps I ought to have told you both," he added, "about what you are bound to know in the long run."

He hesitated, and twisted his spoon this way and that in his strong fingers. "Moira," he said, "my sister—your—your Aunt Hannah, that is, was married. She had been married for years and years, though few but I knew it. And who do you fancy her husband was?"

The girl's face was bent on him with a swift, feminine interest. "I couldn't guess, dad," she replied; "why I believe I never saw Aunt Hannah."

The diver took a hasty sip at his teacup. "Oh, yes, you did," he said; "when you were a little thing she came once or twice, but—but you wouldn't remember her, I doubt. However, that doesn't matter, you have seen her husband, and quite lately."

A singular embarrassment seemed to have fallen on John Davenal. He coughed and cleared his throat. "You'll be surprised," he continued, "and so will Kit—Kit especially, Moira. What do you say to Dennis Hartigan for—for an uncle?"

Moira started—then frowned—the diver saw the frown. "Mr. Hartigan," she exclaimed; "Mr. Hartigan Aunt Hannah's husband, and we never knew—Kit never knew!"

"No," assented John Davenal; "it was her wish and his. They as good as parted soon after they were married. He was a wild young chap, and she had a good situation—the marriage was a secret one and she hadn't left Lady Tarleton before she found out that Dennis wasn't what she thought him. So she sent him back to the sea and kept on as a lady's maid."

Moira pondered. "How very peculiar!" she commented, "but I should say Aunt Hannah was very wise—I couldn't fancy Mr. Hartigan being nice."

John Davenal stole a quick glance at her. "You wouldn't have liked him for a father, eh, my lass?" he queried. The girl shivered.

"Not for worlds," she replied. "It's quite bad enough to have him for an uncle—or a brother, as poor

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Kit has. But there, I mustn't say that, for Kit is so fond of him, and so happy he has come home. She's been quite miserable because he hasn't been here yesterday or to-day."

The diver put down his spoon. "Moira," he said, "yon detective fellow, who came in here last night, and worried you about that chloroform-bottle, I saw him this morning and he knew all about Dennis and Hannah being married."

"Oh," responded Moira dubiously, "but I don't see what it has to do with us. But he was such a queer person; I couldn't make out what he wanted with the bottle, or how he came to know we had it."

John Davenal put a hand on hers. "Yes," he repeated, "and Mr—Mr. What's-his-name—Mr. Ussher, said it was no use to him, now that no charge was being brought against Dennis."

Moira gasped. "No charge!" she murmured. The diver lowered his glance, his voice had been growing more and more husky and embarrassed.

"Aye," he assented, "they—they were saying in Groudle this morning that Hannah had been chloroformed to death."

"Chloroformed!" said Moira slowly, and there was a thrill of horror in her tone that struck the diver to the heart.

"But—but it isn't really thought now that—that Dennis did it," stammered the diver, "and, after all, lass, he—he is your—your—uncle, and you must try to think well of him. Many a man has been proved innocent that folks once believed guilty. Blood's thicker than water, Moira, and we must stand by our own."

Moira rested her soft chin in her palms, absorbed by a profound and tragic consideration.

"So that," she said, "was why the detective wanted the chloroform bottle. They believed that he had killed her. How horrible!"

John Davenal pushed back his chair. "Don't be over hasty, lass," he bade her, in a hard, constrained voice, "the stuff was bought in kindness to me, and signed for squarely in the book. No doubt that was how the police found out he'd had it."

"But I couldn't find the bottle," objected Moira, out of her reverie; "what if he took it away with him?"

The diver began to stir his tea again. "That can't be, lass," he told her drily, "for I put it by myself, and carried it up to Mr. Ussher this morning." Moira sighed, a sigh of relief.

"That settles it," she rejoined, "but what a strange coincidence, that Aunt Hannah should have been chloroformed, and Mr. Hartigan have bought some of the same stuff himself."

Moira started. "Oh, dad," she interrupted herself, "you're not eating a bite. Don't let us talk about the dreadful thing any more, you're making yourself ill again."

She slipped a crumpet on to his plate. Then an anxious expression sprang into her eyes.

"I do wish," she confessed, "that Kit would come back. It will upset her, won't it, to find out all this in a breath. And Mr. Hartigan not having been near us for two days will make her more anxious than ever. Poor Kit, she won't know what to think—how terrible if she were to—to believe him guilty, even for a moment. Oh, but she couldn't, she is too fond of him. I don't think, when you are very fond of anyone, that you can believe ill of them."

Moira coloured, and looked down at the shining steel bars of the ancient, homely fender.

"Dad," she pursued, "that reminds me, I—I want to tell you something. Something about myself." She paused, stole from her chair, and leant over him as he sat in his.

"Dad," she faltered, "you mustn't think I've been sly or—or afraid of your knowing. I didn't really know myself till—till quite lately. I suppose, if my mother had lived, I could have talked to her even before I was sure."

John Davenal drew a deep breath, but he said nothing. Moira put her cheek to his.

"Don't be angry, dad," she begged, "or—or sorry. I'm going to be your own little daughter just the same, and I believe I don't love him any better than you, only—only differently."

She stopped. The knob of the door outer had whined, and the tones of a man's and a woman's voices sounded in the tiny hall. They were those of Kate and Dennis Hartigan. An exclamation burst from the diver's lips, and he rose from his chair.

"It's them," he said in a hoarse murmur, "they may have met by chance—she may have heard nothing. Best be careful, lass."

Moira nodded, forgetting her interrupted confidence, and crossed to open the door. The ex-steward and his sister had lingered momentarily in the small ante-chamber without.

Kate Hartigan passed her brusquely into the kitchen, and went to the rear of the cottage to remove her hat and jacket. Dennis Hartigan followed loungingly. The diver met him.

"I—I know, Dennis," he said, in a low tone, "and so does Moira. We haven't told Kit—have you?"

The ex-steward shrugged his shoulders. "Not I," he responded, in the same fashion, and added aloud: "Give me something to wet my whistle, I'm as dry as a limekiln."

Moira moved towards the teapot, but he stayed her with an impatient gesture.

"No slops for me," he said. The diver muttered an apology, and himself had recourse to a cupboard whence he produced a bottle of whisky. The ex-steward picked up the steaming kettle, and mixed a glass of hot grog.

"The wind here's confoundedly cold," he observed, by way of explanation, as he tossed off a good third of the beverage, "and my nerves want screwing up—Kit and I had a narrow escape from being run down at the level-crossing."

"Kit!" cried Moira, "how frightened she would be! She hates trains."

"Do I?" Kate Hartigan asked calmly; "I suppose I do. But I couldn't help being frightened, you see. I'm not a *man*."

The blind girl had come back unperceived into the room. She sat down at the table, and Moira hastened to attend to her. Dennis Hartigan drank the rest of his grog and helped himself to a biscuit. The diver watched him, glancing occasionally from him to Moira, and from Moira to the ex-steward.

At last he forced himself to venture upon some commonplace remark, and the singular sense of strain that hung over the quartette lessened somewhat. John Davenal resumed his seat at the table and the meal proceeded.

When it was at an end, the diver rose, got his hat, and lit a pipe. "I'm in the mood for a stroll," he observed, "what do you say?"

"I've no objection," answered the other gruffly. He left the table, caught up his peaked cap, donned it, and put

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the end of a long cigar to John Davenal's briar. Then, side by side, they went out into the first of the gloaming.

Before they made their exit, John Davenal had turned his back to his companion, and, with a glance over his shoulder at the blind girl, caught Moira's eye, and laid his finger on his lip.

Moira understood. She was not to speak to the blind girl of the awful suspicion that had flung a transient shadow upon her brother. But the caution was not needed. Conversation was the last thing which Kit appeared to contemplate. Seating herself by the fire, she abandoned herself to silence and inaction. She scarcely seemed even to be thinking. Moira, too, was occupied with her own thoughts—she had realised suddenly that she had not told the diver who it was she loved—not better than himself, but yet "differently."

## ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

### A Spark and an Open Door.

"Excellent, excellent, you make me blush for my own wretched display. Shall we have another game, and make it a hundred-up this time?"

Irene Tarleton fished out of the dusty pocket of the antiquated billiard-table the ball she had just put down.

"You ought to blush for your duplicity, Mr. Jerome," she said. "I suppose you do *play* sometimes, instead of only pretending. But I don't mean to let you flatter me any more by doing it."

The war-correspondent put away the rest she had been using. "I'm out of form," he answered; "honestly I am. Besides, I think your style of playing is better suited to this table."

His fair antagonist laughed outright as she relinquished her own cue. "That is as much as to say," she retorted, "that I'm too much of an amateur to be bothered by this ghastly cloth. Well, to be frank, that last break was a series of sheer flukes."

She laughed again, her ripple of merriment sounding clearly in the great room, whose shaded gas-brackets struggled with the dying sunlight of the Spring day.

"Was it?" said Paul Jerome thoughtfully, and he rolled a ball to strike the opposite cushion. It rebounded, and after describing a complicated succession of angles, returned to the head of the table, and stopped by the red ball.

"Life is very like a billiard-table," he added, "only we don't know what is in the mind of Fate, when she gives us that little tap with the cue of destiny. If I had guessed, for instance, that my journey to the Balkans for the *Gazette* was to bring me round by Petersburg, Copenhagen, and Hull to the coast of Cumberland, and that here I should encounter you again, how much more contented I should have been."

"Would you?" murmured Irene. The war-correspondent drew a step closer to her.

"Would I?" he repeated. "Candidly, Miss Tarleton, I was horribly frightened sometimes out yonder. I ended by wanting to come back so badly that I was afraid of Fate playing me some nasty trick. When I went out first I rather hoped I might go under—I was only a Fleet Street hack who had bluffed his way into a post he might not be able to fill. And—and I had a certain heart-ache that warned me I was better out of England, if not out of existence."

He hesitated, contemplating her with a characteristic coolness. "But when I found I had made a hit," he went on, "and might come back somewhat more prosperous and rather less of a nobody than I had been, why, I got positively nervous. And when I was captured by the Turks——"

Irene Tarleton's gaze drooped. "I know," she said, "there were no dispatches of yours in the *Gazette* for a week. It was dreadful."

Paul Jerome leant on the table, in such a fashion that his hand was very close to Irene's. "Then you did think of me," he asked. Irene looked down.

"Of course," she answered, and added quickly, "you didn't imagine I could forget a friend, and especially a friend in danger?"

The war-correspondent winced. "N—no, I suppose not," he replied drily. The next instant he had caught up a cue and a rest, and was addressing himself to a difficult if impromptu stroke. Lady Tarleton had just entered.

"Ah, Irene, my dear," she said, "I have been wondering how you have been contriving to amuse yourself. The Tower is really too terribly dull for anything. We shall have Mr. Jerome beating a precipitate retreat to town."

"Not at all, Lady Tarleton," the war-correspondent assured her. "I find the old place extremely interesting, and Stormont has promised me some deep-sea fishing. Deep-sea fishing is my delight."

"As it used to be Stormont's," remarked Lady Tarleton, "before he took to running about in the heart of Asia and Africa. However, it seems to agree with him, and that's everything, is it not?"

She turned to her daughter.

"I'm afraid, Irene," she pursued, "that I must carry you off for the moment. I want you to write me some letters. Really, this unfortunate affair of poor Davenal has been engrossing me—that detective man simply haunts the Tower like an incarnate interrogation point. But I must try to attend to other matters, and you are such a sensible little secretary, my dear. So sorry to spoil your game, Mr. Jerome, but I think you will find Stormont in the neighbourhood of the stables."

Effusive, yet insistent, Lady Tarleton bore off her daughter, a significant glance had said more to Irene than was contained in her mother's spoken sentences. In her boudoir Lady Tarleton snapped at her daughter in a truly feminine fashion.

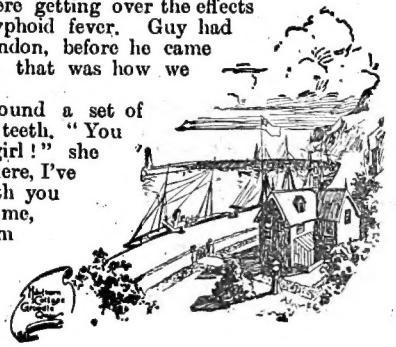
"Upon my word, Irene!" she exclaimed. "On a first acquaintance, you make yourself amazingly free with Mr. Jerome, who is nothing, after all, but a common newspaper person, without money or connections. It is just permissible for your uncle to be intimate with him, but you are not a wanderer on the face of the earth, an associate with gipsies and beggars."

Irene shrugged her shoulders. "Mr. Jerome, mamma," she responded crisply, "is very clever, very brave, and a thorough gentleman. What is more, he is a Society 'lion,' or will be, when he gets back to London. That is, if he lets himself be lionised, which he probably won't. But if it comes to that, he and I have met before—often."

Lady Tarleton stared. "Good Heavens, child!" she cried, "Where?"

Irene drew herself up, as if to brave the storm that spoke in her mother's voice.

"At Nice," she answered, "when we were there on Guy's yacht. He was there getting over the effects of an attack of typhoid fever. Guy had known him in London, before he came into the baronetcy, that was how we met!"



Her mother ground a set of still white and even teeth. "You reckless, deceitful girl!" she exclaimed, "but there, I've no time to deal with you now. But mark me, Irene, one symptom of sentimentality towards this Mr. Jerome, and I pack you off to your aunt's in

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Yorkshire. What would Guy think of you, if he knew?"

Irene made a wry mouth, but her eyes ran over with merriment. However she did not choose to take up more openly the gage of battle that her mother had thrown down, so she got pen, ink, and stationery, and settled down to write, from her mother's dictation, note after note, effusive but characterless.

Meanwhile, Paul Jerome, unconscious of the storm-cloud that had burst over Irene's head, was strolling, cigar in mouth, through the long avenue of Groudle Tower. He had failed to find his friend Stormont, and was pursuing the search with resignation, content to chew the cud of his thoughts, cultivate an appetite for dinner, and await the advent of the meal, when he should see Irene again.

Yet, as he strolled and pondered, his reflections were fairly equally divided between Irene Tarleton and the little blind girl whom he had rescued that afternoon from a horrible death. "I am Kate Hartigan," she had said, "and I live with Mr. Davenal and his daughter at Hawthorn Cottage," so she was Dennis Hartigan's sister, and it was Dennis Hartigan who had been arrested by Ussher on suspicion of Hannah Davenal's murder, it was Dennis Hartigan who had so deliberately deserted the blind girl on the level crossing, two hundred yards from an advancing express.

The war-correspondent frowned, he had been a "crime special" in the days of his reporterhood, and his trained scent suggested to him that he was on some kind of a trail. Should he follow it? It would be something to do for a day or two at hours when he could not see or speak to Irene. Besides, it would amuse him to best the blundering Ussher once more, as he had bested him in the old Fleet Street days.

As he smiled at the recollection he was aware of the swift, rhythmic beat of a well-broken team, and looked up. A high phaeton was nearing him through the quiet fall of the pleasant evening. There was still plenty of light, and he saw the face of the driver in the same moment as the latter perceived him. The phaeton stopped, and the war-correspondent sprang forward.

"My dear Vanbrugh!" he cried.

"My dear Jerome!" exclaimed the person addressed, and, giving the reins to his groom, Sir Guy Vanbrugh leapt out of the phaeton and seized Paul Jerome by the hands.

"This is an unexpected pleasure," he said. "What on earth brings you into these outlandish parts? Are you on a walking-tour?"

The war-correspondent returned the cordial salutation as cordially.

"I struck up a friendship with Mr. Stormont in Petersburg," he answered. "We travelled home together, both ultimately bound for London. He wanted to revisit Cumberland, and I was, for the moment, on a loose end. So here I am, renewing my acquaintance with your charming cousin and making that of her mamma."

Guy Vanbrugh laughed. "Yes," he said, "you're quite a notable now. My hearty congratulations! Not that I was surprised to hear of your successes—I always knew you had it in you. But I am keeping you."

"Not at all," rejoined the war-correspondent, "I was thinking of retracing my steps; I have only been looking for an appetite."

The other turned to his groom. "Drive on up the avenue," he instructed, "we will walk."

The man obeyed, the baronet slipped his arm into that of the war-correspondent, and they strolled on together.

"Excuse this expedient to get a moment alone with you," observed Guy Vanbrugh, "but you mentioned my cousin Irene. Now I wouldn't be impertinent for worlds, but I am going to risk taking something sufficiently for granted to drop you a hint. If Lady T. as she may do, thinks fit to tell you a 'secret' about Irene and myself, don't pay any attention to it, there's a good chap. Irene and I are merely chums; to—to be honest, my affections are engaged elsewhere, and she knows it, and, I believe, is confoundedly glad of it. But we're keeping Lady T. in the dark, for the sake of peace."

Paul Jerome smiled. "You're an awfully decent fellow, Vanbrugh," he replied, "and there isn't much wrong with your eyesight. I'm glad you told me. Thanks, very much!"

"Oh, that's all right," said his companion, embarrassed, "by the bye, to change the subject, I believe there has been some sort of a tragedy up at the Tower. One of the servants, they say!"

"Yes," answered the war-correspondent, "Lady Tarleton's maid, an elderly woman, was found dead in bed, chloroformed and smothered. An old police butt of mine has the case in hand, an amiable blunderer named Ussher, a London man. He is most amusingly bothered. I am half inclined to solve the mystery myself, and wipe Ussher's eye, not for the first time."

As they talked, Guy Vanbrugh had turned their steps down a narrower path that wound, cutting off a corner, to the Tower entrance. Penetrating a dense shrubbery, it had brought them within sight of a low stone building, domed and windowless, and set in a species of grassy basin. The basin was incircled by stone uprights and chains, and entered by a flight of stone stairs.

"What is that place?" asked the war-correspondent. Guy Vanbrugh answered him absently.

"That," he said, "oh, that is the family mausoleum—generations of Lennoxes lie there in their last sleep."

"Lennoxes?" repeated Paul Jerome, questioningly.

"Yes," rejoined Guy Vanbrugh, "Stormont's wife was a Lennox, Lady Tarleton is a Lennox. Stormont enjoys for life the Lennox estates and fortune. But as for the mausoleum it has not been opened for many a long year."

"Hasn't it?" queried the war-correspondent drily, "well, it's open now."

He pointed to a door that had been brought into sight by their onward progress. It was a low and massive portal, giving access to the lightless interior of the mausoleum. And against the blackness flickered a yellow spark, like a stricken match. While they looked, it went out.

*(The explanation of the light will appear next Tuesday.)*

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Fred: "They tell me at your office that you are only one of the clerks. And you said you were a director." Charles: "So I am. I address envelopes."

Landlady (meeting Mr. Growler on the stairs): "Singing in the morning? Don't you know it's unlucky to sing before breakfast?" Mr. Growler: "It may be, but somehow I never feel like singing after breakfast."

Fashionable Mother (languidly): "Well, Sarah, how is baby to-day?" Nurse: "He cut two teeth this morning, ma'am." Fashionable Mother (still more languidly): "That was careless of you, Sarah! You oughtn't to let a young baby play with a knife."

"Bobby is attending to his pianoforte lessons very faithfully of late," said the youth's uncle. "Yes," replied his mother. "I don't have any trouble with him about that now." "How did you manage it?" "Some of the neighbours complained of the noise his exercises made, and I told him about it. Now he thinks it's fun to practise."

"I'm dreadfully afraid that Cousin Jasper's wife is an awful gadabout," said Mrs. Brown to her husband after a visit to her wealthy relative in the City. "Why, mother?" "Well, she has her name printed on cards, and in the corner it says 'Tuesdays.' And I asked her what it meant, and she said that was her day at home. Think of it! Only home one day in the week!"

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# FOR HIS SAKE!

**The Story of How a Girl's Devotion Saved Her Lover.**

*Containing the Incident Depicted on the Cover.*

META RAYNES was a typewriter girl, and lived at the top of an old-fashioned building in a central part of London.

Perhaps it was a lonely life for a girl, but Meta had grown accustomed to being by herself, and being of a sweet and sunny disposition, she contrived to find compensations even in her hard working existence.

She loved her big "garret," as she called it, and as indeed it was. She had made it cosy and homelike with a curtain across it to screen away the bedroom side, and with cheap rugs, a few pictures, some books, and a comfortable chair or two had really managed to make for herself a charming den.

If she loved the inside of her room, she loved even more the outlook from its window. Standing there she could see for miles across the roofs and towers of London; she could look down into the green trees of a square close by, and she could gaze upon a tall church tower that rose heavenward opposite her window, and she had learnt to have quite a friendly feeling for a gargoyle with a ferocious dog's head that jutted out in her direction.

But her Sundays were the last and greatest compensation of her otherwise lonely life, for on Sundays she could meet Jack Melville—Jack, her handsome young lover—who was working so hard to make a home for them both!

On a heavenly Sunday in May they were strolling slowly across a deserted corner of Richmond Park, enjoying the loveliness around them, when Jack exclaimed suddenly:

"Meta, I believe those two bounders whom I call by courtesy my chiefs have a regular down on me. Just lately they have done their very best to provoke and irritate me in every possible way."

Meta started violently, and Jack, who held her hand, felt the movement, and looked round at her.

"Why did you——" he began; but she interrupted him.

"I—I think I can guess why they don't like you, Jack," she said fast and nervously. "I told you, didn't I, that both your chiefs, Mr. Daubeny and his brother, Mr. George Daubeny, have given me a quantity of work lately?"

Jack nodded.

"Well," she went on in a lower voice, "they—oh! Jack—I didn't mean to tell you—I was afraid you might be angry, but I—they—I mean——"

"What do you mean?" Jack stopped dead and looked hard at the girl.

"I mean," Meta answered, averting her face to hide the burning blushes that swept over it, "I think perhaps they are nasty because they know—I am engaged to you!"

"They haven't been rude to you—they haven't insulted you?" Jack demanded fiercely, so fiercely that for a moment she repented of having told him anything.

"Not rude, Jack," she said, "and don't look at me so angrily. I have done nothing I am ashamed to tell you, dear." Meta turned back to him and laid her arms about his neck. "You are my whole world—you have my whole heart; I only did not tell you about those horrid men because I did not want to make you angry, as you are in their office."

Jack's fierce looks melted into a smile; he drew his betrothed closer to him.

"They are utter cads!" he said scornfully, "and I sometimes think George Daubeny is on the verge of lunacy; he *is* a cranky creature! Tell me, have they dared to admire *you?*"

"I have often had to go to their house about work," the girl continued; "they live together, you know. They have given me quantities and quantities of typewriting, as I told you, Jack; and then, lately, each of them in turn has asked me to marry him, and has worried me to do it. Of course I refused—refused with scorn. Perhaps I was too scornful, but I hate them both—I *hate* them! They remind me of reptiles, crawling, loathsome reptiles."

"But do they know you and I——" Jack began, and the girl again broke in.

"Oh! Jack, I couldn't help telling the elder Mr. Daubeny. He has always been the worst. He has almost persecuted me; and at last one day, when he insisted on walking home with me, and had worried me until I was nearly distracted, I turned on him and exclaimed: 'For pity's sake leave me alone! I am betrothed to a man whose little finger is more to me than your whole body, even if he is only a clerk in your office. What are you to me beside Jack Melville?'"

"That was not wise, dear."

"Jack, I know, I know! The moment I had said it, the moment I saw the awful look of baffled rage and malice on his face, I repented of my folly. But it was too late. I heard him mutter under his breath: 'Melville shall pay for this!' and ever since I have been dreading, dreading—I know not what."

Her voice was so strained, so anxious, that her lover tried to laugh away her fears.

"My dear child, it is all right," he said, "don't look so anxious. They can only make things a bit unpleasant for me; they can't do any real harm."

"But supposing—oh, Jack, supposing they hurt you?"

"Hurt me? My darling, don't be afraid. This is the twentieth century, not the twelfth; men don't go about hurting one another nowadays. Bless you, don't worry your pretty head about it. I should like to kill those two cads for persecuting you, that's all!" He spoke viciously, and his face grew so dark that Meta shivered. "Not that it is surprising that anyone should admire you, my darling," he added vehemently.

And indeed Meta was very fair to look upon. Slight and very graceful, she made you think of a tall white lily, and the likeness was emphasised by the exquisite whiteness of her skin, and her glorious crown of golden hair.

Her eyes, blue as forget-me-nots, looked wistfully into Jack's as they moved slowly onwards; and he drew her again into his arms, and kissed her tenderly, with the words:

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"No wonder they think you are throwing yourself away on a poor beggar like me, my beautiful queen!"

"Throwing myself away!" she answered impetuously, her face suddenly transfigured with love, "did I not say you were my world? What is all the rest of the world to me in comparison with you? Less than the dust under my feet! There is nothing I would not give up for you, Jack, and nothing would be too hard for me to do—for your dear sake."

* * * * *

A week later Meta stood on the doorstep of the Daubenys' house, a parcel of typewriting in her hand. Most gladly would she have refused to do more work for the two brothers who had persecuted her, but such a refusal would have been suicidal for her. Work was infinitely precious, and to offend the two brothers, joint heads of an important firm, would have been madness.

Still it was with white face and fast-beating heart that Meta waited on the doorstep on that sunny May morning.

It seemed to her an interminable time before the door was opened, and when it swung back at last, Meta recoiled before the changed and ghastly expression on the butler's face.

It was the colour of ashes; and he was shaking in every limb.

"Is something wrong?" the girl asked abruptly.

"Lor', miss, ain't you heard?" the man answered in a whisper, glancing fearfully over his shoulder; "though how could you have heard; it's only just took place. Master—Thomas Daubeny—is, has been—oh, lor'! miss, it's something awful!"

By this time Meta's own limbs were shaking; she grasped at the lintel of the door to steady herself.

"What is it?" she said. "Has something happened?"

"Something happened?" The man looked at her with dazed eyes. "Why, yes, miss—ain't you heard? Mr. Thomas has been murdered—murdered in the office this morning by one of his own clerks."

"Murdered!" Meta's voice was high and thin, it no longer seemed to be her own. "Who did it? Why did they kill him? Tell me quickly," and hardly knowing what she did, she gripped the butler's arm and shook it.

"They do say it was all to do with a woman," the man answered, recovering some of his equanimity in the pleasure of telling his story, "though who the woman is nobody knows. But the murderer, he's been took up, and Mr. George, he——"

An arm suddenly thrust the butler aside, and the younger Daubeny appeared behind him,

"Come in, Miss Raynes," the young man said, and Meta, even in that moment of dismay, found herself wondering whether the note in his voice was one of triumph or of horror.

"Come in, I will tell you." He put out his hand and drew her through a door opening from the hall.

This was his brother's private study, the room in which Meta had been accustomed to receive his orders, and it looked so normal, so ordinary, that the girl speculated with a shudder whether the terrible news she had heard could possibly be true.

"Your brother!" she faltered, looking into George Daubeny's evil face; "it is not true that——"

"It is perfectly true that he has been murdered—foully murdered!" was the answer, given in an even voice which still held that something in it of triumph—or was it horror?

"And shall I tell you who killed him?" The man she loathed drew nearer to her and laid a heavy hand on her arm.

"*My brother was killed,*" he said slowly and emphatically, "*by your lover, Jack Melville.*"

Tearing herself from his hold, Meta drew back from him, and looked him full in the face, with gleaming eyes and proudly uplifted head.

"It is a lie!" she said; "the sort of lie that a cur like you *would* tell! Jack Melville is not the kind of man who is a murderer."

For a second the flashing of her eyes, the indignant scorn on her face seemed to cow the man before her. Then he recovered himself and laughed, harshly, wildly.

"A lie is it, my pretty dear?" he said recklessly. "A jury will decide that question. Your fine lover is safe in the hands of the police. My brother was stabbed—stabbed in the back with a knife bearing Jack Melville's name upon it. Your lover is doomed!"

Meta's face grew ashen white; she swayed a little where she stood; then controlled herself by a supreme effort, drew herself up to her superb height, and waved her hand with a haughty gesture to the man who barred her way to the door.

"Let me pass," she said; "do you think you can frighten *me?* Do you think the woman who loves him would ever believe that Jack Melville stabbed a man in the *back*? Tell your story to the jury; let fifty judges condemn the man I love—but I know—I shall always know—that his innocence is as clear as the day!"

The July sunshine poured into Meta Rayne's window. She stood there listlessly, looking out at the dusty green of the trees and the tall church tower with eyes that saw none of them.

Only one vision danced before them—morning, noon and night—the vision of a prisoner in the dock, whose eyes had met hers across the crowded court, whose voice had said firmly: "Not guilty, my lord." Whose face had seemed to her, as it had always seemed—the purest and noblest in the world.

To-morrow the jury would give their verdict; the verdict, the world said, was absolutely certain beforehand; Jack Melville would be condemned to death. Meta, standing alone n her room, clenched her hands in a very agony of impotent longing, impotent despair, and dropping her face against the window pane, she moaned aloud:

"Oh! God, if I could help him, if there is a way in which I can help him, let me find it! Give me something to do for his sake!"

The words had scarcely left her lips when the door opened softly, and George Daubeny stole into the room, an expression of such fiendish malice on his face as made Meta shrink terrified from him.

A sudden recollection swept over her of Jack's words, spoken in Richmond Park only so few weeks ago: "I sometimes think George Daubeny is on the verge of lunacy." The wild eyes, the strange gestures of her unwelcome visitor, made Meta wonder with a strange contraction of fear at her heart whether George Daubeny was mad now?

His conduct went far to justify her fears. Without speaking a word of greeting, he walked swiftly to the window, and, scarcely noticing her except to bestow upon her a demoniacal smile, he leant far out, his gaze fixed upon the church tower.

Then he turned to her and spoke rapidly.

"So your fine lover is guilty—no doubt of that, is there? No doubt, no doubt!"—he laughed wildly—"verdict to-morrow, you know," he nodded his head frantically; "and sentence—sentence—we all know what that will be—ha—ha—'hang by the neck—until——'"

"Hush—hush!" Meta cried passionately.

"Not so fast," he answered, gripping her hand in his own that burnt feverishly; "I say 'hang by the neck,' that's the sentence—*unless—you—step in and save him!*"

"*I?*"

"Yes—you—my lovely white lily. Give me a kiss and I'll tell you how you can do it."

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Seizing her roughly, he pressed a kiss on her cheek, then almost flung her from him, as she shuddered and cried out:

"That's it, spurn your best friend, perhaps I won't tell you now how to save your precious lover."

"Ah! tell me, tell me!" she said, her hands going out in a pitiful gesture; "I will do anything for his sake."

"Anything? Will you? Look out there!"—he dragged her to the window—"see that gargoyle with the dog's head?"

Meta assented.

"There is a letter in that stone dog's mouth," he said impressively; "that letter will give you the name of my brother's murderer! Ha! ha! ha!"

"A letter there? Your brother's murderer. Then you know—you know who did it?"

"I know—I know!"—a demoniacal laugh broke from him and echoed wildly round the room—"it is my secret, mine, mine—and you must hunt for it in the dog's mouth, ha—ha!"

"You know, yet you have let Jack——" Her voice failed, as the madman laughed afresh, flung his arms into the air, shouted, "go and look for yourself—the secret is *there*"—and, first pointing dramatically towards the window, he next flung himself across the room and rushed precipitately through the door and downstairs.

Meta, too dazed and terrified to follow him, stood still for a moment, then she leant far out of the casement, craning her neck and straining her eyes, until all at once she exclaimed:

"He may be mad, but he has said one true thing; there *is* a letter in the dog's mouth. Ah! if his words should be true! If they should be true! Jack—my Jack, I will do it for your sake!"

* * * * *

Slowly and carefully Meta climbed the narrow winding staircase of the tower. By dint of coaxing and bribing the old verger had allowed her to go up the stairs, and she wound her way up and up, pausing now and again to look out of the wide openings in the wall to the dizzy depths below.

Presently the stairs came to an abrupt end, she was confronted by a blank wall, whilst on her right hand gaped one of those wide openings that gave upon the outside world.

Clutching at the wall, she leant out. Below her she dared not look. A few feet from her, round to the left, she could see the gargoyle, jutting out over space. She shrank back and shivered, shutting her eyes because of the awful giddiness that seized her.

"I cannot do it—I cannot!" she moaned.

That moment's glimpse had shown her that to reach the gargoyle, she must climb out of the opening on to a narrow parapet that ran round the spire, and reach from that to the corner of the buttress from which the gargoyle's long body sprang.

"It is impossible," she said again, and then suddenly she stood upright and opened her eyes.

"I must try," she said; "it is Jack's life! I can but make the attempt, if I fail—I fail; but I must try for his sake."

Sick with horror, her head dizzy and swimming, she crawled out of the opening on to the narrow parapet without. So tightly did her hands cling to the few stones that jutted out of the wall that the blood dripped from them, but she did not heed it. Keeping her head erect, lest for a moment she should see the ghastly gulf below her, she kept on—and on to the angle from which the gargoyle jutted.

It was a narrow enough angle in all conscience, but compared with that awful parapet it seemed wide—almost safe; and Meta leant for a moment against the wall to take breath. Once, only once her eyes glanced downwards, and a shiver ran through her.

The roofs, the trees, the towers that lay far below for one wild moment rocked and swung before her eyes; she shut them closely and gripped more firmly at the slab of stone till her equilibrium returned. Then she began the most perilous part of her terrible adventure.

Flinging one arm as far as she dared along the body of the stone dog, she dragged her own body forward—forward—forward towards the gargoyle's mouth, half hanging over the abyss, half pressed against the stone beast.

Would she reach its mouth? Could she ever reach it, or would she, in the act of doing so, overreach herself—slip and fall—and fall into those dizzy, seething depths below.

"God help me—for his sake!" she cried aloud in her agony, and, pulling herself one step further, she put out her right hand once more.

Her hand had touched the letter!

Hardly daring to breathe she drew it from the dog's mouth, and slowly, slowly, with infinite caution, dragged herself back to the angle, every nerve at highest tension, every muscle taut and strained.

She dared not pause in her backward path; she did not rest even for a second in that friendly angle, but crept back, back along the parapet, fearful lest a moment's delay should bring on a paralysis of fear.

And at last, when, trembling in every limb, she crept in again at the wide opening of the tower, it was only to sink down upon the steps, white and unconscious, the letter clasped closely in her hand.

Jack Melville's life was saved. The letter was the confession of the true murderer, another clerk in the office, who on his own death-bed had written the confession and confided it to George Daubeny.

Whether that wretched man had intended to give it to Meta, or whether he divulged the secret unintentionally, will never be known. His reason never returned to him. It was believed that he had himself put the letter into the gargoyle's mouth, but even this fact was never known.

Months went by before Meta recovered from the shock of her awful climb, and though she is now a happy wife, the many grey threads in her golden hair are signs of what she endured during the terrible moments when, as she says, "I hung between Heaven and earth, to save my Jack. I could only have done it for his sake."

**L. G. Moberly.**

## *Result of the "Cats" Competition.*

The Gramophone prizes have been awarded as follows:

E. Gillespie, 10 Wellington Street, Salford, Manchester; Mrs. R. Fuller, 1 Camden Park, Tunbridge Wells, Kent; S. J. Kyberd, 140 Belgrave Road, Hoe Street, Walthamstow; C. Renshaw, Birtle Vicarage, Bury, Lancashire; J. Bradley, 1 St. John Street, Felling-on-Tyne; H. King, 1 Thomas Street, St. Paul, Bristol; Mrs. Howard Watson, The Vicarage, Water Orton, near Birmingham; J. Winfield, 11 Whitehaugh Terrace, Paisley, N. B.; G. H. Barnes, 244 Waterloo Road, Hightown, Manchester; Mrs. Judd, St. Monica, Whitton Road, Twickenham; W. F. Dray, 289 High Street, Lewisham; J. Higton, Hollywell Farm, South Wingfield, Alfreton, Derbyshire; T. M. Loughnan, 24 Mount Pleasant Square, Dublin; H. James, 17 Beach Street, Swansea; Mrs. H. Wyatt, 9 Grange Street, Leigh, Lancashire; H. J. Lewis, 3 The Buildings, Bathampton, near Bath; W. Eggleton, 106 Westbourne Street, Hove, Sussex; W. Webster, 131 Thomson Street, Dennistoun, Glasgow; G. Q. Waters, 75 Court Road, Barry Dock; F. Evans, 11 Briscoe Road, Colliers Wood, Merton, S.W; J. Curtis, 10 Park Street, Griffithstown; H. C. Millen, 77 Rye Hill Park, Peckham Rye; A. Herbert, 16 Whitworth Street, Stanley Grove, Longsight, near Manchester; F. Hepton, 28 Upper Market Street, Woolwich; A. G. Snook, 90 Milkwood Road, Herne Hill.

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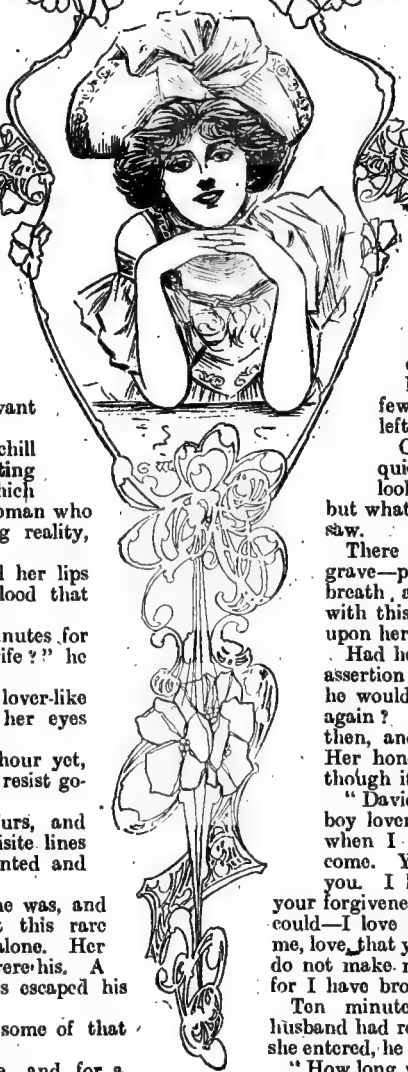
# Out of the Past.



## When Absence Did Not Make the Heart Grow Fonder.

THE great creaking iron gate swung upon its hinges, there was a light yet decided footstep along the pathway to the house, and then the merry tinkle of a bell sounded.

To the man inside, the tuneful melody acted as magic. He rose hastily and opened the door before a servant could do so.

As he opened the door he felt the chill rush of winter air, and caught a fleeting glimpse of the deep, smouldering sky which formed a crimson background for the woman who was his divinity, a beautiful, breathing reality, radiant with love and life.

As he drew her into the house he kissed her lips and cheeks, her hair, and the scarlet blood that coloured her cheeks turned a ruddier hue.

"I have been waiting thirty long minutes for you. Where have you been, my sweet wife?" he added tenderly.

The tone was one of reproof, but the lover-like reproach was dear to her. She lifted her eyes with a half laughing plea in them.

"I didn't expect you home for an hour yet, and the air was so tempting I could not resist going out."

He watched her throw aside her furs, and admired for the hundredth time the exquisite lines of her figure. The bright, gold hair glinted and sparkled against the deep purple toque.

He thought how surpassingly lovely she was, and realised with a thrill of emotion that this rare woman was his. She belonged to him alone. Her mind and heart, her beauty and her soul were his. A sigh of great contentment and happiness escaped his lips.

"Come and sit by the fire, and take some of that Arctic atmosphere off," he said, laughing.

She sat beside him on the oaken settle, and for a while neither spoke, resting in the quiet of perfect harmony, and watching the idle play of the flames as they darted hither and thither. The evening paper lay at his feet, and with a laugh she picked it up.

"Now," she said, "I will read you all the news—war, society, politics—which will you have?" And he, content with the mere sound of her voice, murmured, "Anything."

"Then it will be war," she declared. "for that will be the only way we will ever have any experience about the subject."

She read aloud a few items, and then her eyes wandered slowly down the list of wounded and killed.

"David Hathaway." She got no further. "David Hathaway!" her heart echoed, and then suddenly the whole brutality and fierceness and horror of war seemed to close down upon her and stifle her heart beats. The paper slipped from her hand like an animate thing.

"I must go upstairs," she said, "and re-arrange my hair for dinner."

Something, he knew not what, that rang in her voice, prompted him to turn and look at his wife, but she was shielding her face from the firelight with one white hand.

The slender fingers hid her eyes, and cast her face into shadow; thus protected he could tell nothing of the emotions which were surging through her. She rose abruptly, and, with a few words, promising to return soon, she left the room.

Once in her room she shut the door quietly, and then walked to the window and looked out upon the dull purple twilight; but what lay before her eyes was not what she saw.

There rose before her mental vision a lonely grave—perhaps a mere trench—sharing the last breath and sigh of David Hathaway. And with this picture the knowledge was born in upon her that it was of her own doing.

Had he not left her five years ago with the assertion upon his lips that come what might he would win fortune or die before he saw her again? And she had promised to wait until then, and she had broken her faith, her vow. Her honour had been killed just as surely as though it had been struck by bullets.

"David!" she whispered huskily, "my brave boy lover, I thought it was the end a year ago, when I married, but now the end has really come. You are dead, and I cannot mourn for you. I have wronged you, and I can only ask your forgiveness, for I would not change things if I could—I love my husband. I was lonely—lonely—tell me, love, that you understood how it all happened, and do not make me feel as if I should be the one to die, for I have broken faith, and you have not!"

Ten minutes later she went downstairs. Her husband had reinstated himself by the fire, and, when she entered, he said:

"How long you have kept me waiting. I was just thinking of coming upstairs, to see whether anything had happened to you. It seemed for ever, although I have been trying to occupy the time in reading. By the way, I see the death notice of David Hathaway. He got killed by a stray bullet during a skirmish with the followers of the Mad Mullah. It was a very sad case. Curiously enough, I met his brother in the street yesterday, and he buttonholed me for a loan. Wanted to bring back David's wife and child. They went out a few months ago to join him; he had just begun to get together what promised to be a prosperous trading business when this disturbance occurred, and as he knew the country very well, he joined the forces as a scout. The wife and child are left almost destitute."

She clutched the arm of the chair. "How long had he been married?" she asked.

"Oh, two years, I believe, poor fellow!"

And then a great cloud lifted from her shoulders and vanished for ever; and the exoneration she longed for came.

**Charles Orford.**

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# A GOOD MATCH.

## The Love Story of a Writer and an Actress.

THE season was drawing to a close, and already the earlier birds had departed; the tourist was beginning to crop up in strange localities, and the British lodging-house keeper sniffing the battle afar off, to prepare for war with her natural enemies, the visitors, groups of whom I found scattered about Euston Station as I comfortably ensconced myself in the corner of a carriage bound for Staverton Towers.

A very few months back, Clement Sandering, with whom I was going to stay, had been living in town on a comparatively small income, which he had augmented in a somewhat desultory way, by literary work.

He had written a novel, a successful comedy, an endless variety of articles on an endless variety of subjects, and was looked on as rather a rising man. Probably he had never heard of Staverton Towers, when one morning, amongst the letters and papers which burdened his table, was a note from a firm of lawyers in the City to tell him that the Towers, and a rather extensive property in Meadshire, belonged to him.

Sandering had met with such things in the realms of fiction, and the intimation seemed rather like the foundation of a plot for a novel than a real and veritable possibility. It was true, however; a distant relative of the late owner had died childless in Paris, and within a very short time Sandering had resigned his chambers and left town.

In the former days I had vaguely hovered during the season round a certain Gertrude Leigh, Sandering manifesting a slight disposition to admire her sister Bell.

All this was entirely hopeless, for there was not the very remotest chance of old Sir Thomas consenting, even if the girls had wished it; and Lady Leigh would probably have had fits if the subject had been mentioned to her.

The affair was not very serious on my part, nor, as I think, on Sandering's, though some of his heroines bore a suspicious resemblance to the fair Bell; but, then, one must get his heroines from somewhere, for pictures painted without models are seldom satisfactory.

Circumstances alter cases, however, and his circumstances had very materially altered the case. Since his accession he had been in Paris, where I knew the Loighs were also staying, and though his letters had not said anything particularly pointed, it was evident that they were much together, and only natural to suspect that something would come of it—the usual something.

Immediately on his return he had written to ask me down; there was no one with him, he said, and if I had work to do it would be much quieter than the chambers; so taking a heap of paper to try to ease a conscience which demanded industry, and secretly resolving to do nothing but lie under the trees and smoke, I started, anxious to see Sandering, in case his bachelor days were soon to be ended; for marriage sometimes alters a man very considerably, and a young wife has not always an enthusiastic affection for her husband's bachelor friend.

He met me at the station, and we drove through some of the prettiest scenery in Meadshire to the Towers, which was a very fine old house.

After dinner we retired to a small room to smoke, and discuss all that had happened since we last met.

"And how are things theatrical?" he asked, when he had given me details of his journeying.

"Much as they were when you left, I think; and, in one way, as they will be always. The good pieces pay; the bad ones don't. All the same, I suppose we are to understand that the drama is declining?"

"That's a very silly cry," Sandering answered. "There are plenty of good actors, and plenty of good plays. I don't mean to say that the whole thing is in a perfectly satisfactory state.

"A number of gentlemen, and some ladies, adopt the profession now, and study it; but many follows go on the stage with the idea that the art of acting can be learnt any morning before breakfast, and, under the impression that "ease" is the great requisite, behave in drawing-rooms with the sort of ease that City clerks exhibit in their favourite liquor-shops."

"But there is a bigger blot on the stage than what old actors call the "cuff-shooters." Look in the photograph shop windows," I replied.

"Yes, at the—those—the—well, the 'popular actresses.' Popular actresses—my stars! As you know, I am very far from being a straight-laced moralist, but to see long rows of ogling creatures, whose modesty is as scant as their attire, labelled 'Popular Actresses,' is a little too much; and men who have the interest of the stage at heart ought to protest vigorously."

I could only assent.

"Why do these sort of persons go on at all?" continued Sandering, who evidently felt the subject deeply. "From vanity, generally, or some reason other than the making of small salary, or a desire to learn the profession.

"Either they want the money, or they don't want it; in one case they have no business on the stage, and in the other the less business they have there the better. I speak, of course, of the "shop-window actresses,' and it is for the sake of the gentlewomen who are really actresses that I am so indignant."

"It's a rough sea and a difficult voyage, but how bravely some little girls weather the storm. For instance the young lady—for she was a young lady, although she had been doomed to wear something like the costume of an acrobat—who played Mary in your comedy," I said.

Sandering rose slowly from his chair, and leant against the mantelpiece, smoking thoughtfully.

"Miss—what was her name?" I continued. "You seemed much struck by her once, and that is why she was taken from the ranks to play the part, I presume. Miss Burton—that's it. I suppose you have forgotten all about her, now?"

"No," he slowly replied, with a somewhat troubled face; "I have thought a good deal of her—and a good deal less of myself in consequence."

I looked at him inquiringly.

"I was struck with her, as you say, and told her so, and used to take her about to afternoon performances and that sort of thing; and gave her the part in the comedy, as you know."

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"Which was quite as much to your advantage as to hers, for she played it charmingly," I interrupted.

"She did, certainly. Well, I used to take her about, and got to like her, awfully. After a time she seemed to grow shy about it—wouldn't come always when I wanted her to, and I was vexed and couldn't understand it.

"One evening, when she was out of an engagement, I wanted to take her to the opera, and she made an excuse, and so I asked her about it. She said, 'Of course I'd like to go with you every day, dear, only you know how particular I have to be, and if we are always together, people will talk and wonder where——' I think she was going to say, 'Wonder where it will end,' so it occurred to me to wonder where it would, and knowing where it ought—for she was evidently very fond of me—I told her that I wanted to marry her."

He stopped and gazed thoughtfully into the fire.

"And what did she reply?" I asked.

"I took her to the opera that evening. Things went on for a couple of months—she was a dear, good little girl," he said, breaking off his sentence and pausing, as some reminiscences appeared to flit through his mind, "and a lady, too. I don't mean to say she would get through a wood of social etiquette, as Gertrude Leigh might do, without knocking against some of the trees, but in heart she was as perfect a lady as the best of them.

"However," he continued, "things went on for a couple of months, and she was away from town when I heard, to my intense amazement, as you know, that this place had come to me. I wrote to her at once, but I had to go to Paris on business connected with the estate before returning to town. Well, the Leighs were there, and so was Ethilton, and—and he knew about the affair—with the little girl, and——"

"And I suppose he indulged in that mysterious style of conversation which is vaguely termed 'saying things'?" I asked.

"Yes. He talked about my position in the country, and my small knowledge of a girl whose associations had been somewhat equivocal; and said what a good thing it would be if I went in for Bell Leigh—you know I used to like her, rather—and he persuaded me to stay on—he was always talking about it—and——"

"Lord Ethilton is such a very great swell that I can't be expected to see things from his elevated point of view; but I must say I fail utterly to understand why your position in the county should oblige you to act dishon——"

"Go on," Sandering said, as I stopped short; "oblige me to act dishonourably——!"

"To act unkindly," I continued, "to Miss Burton."

"And you think I ought to go and see her? Perhaps she has forgotten all about me," he said.

"I'm sure that you ought to go; and she's not the sort of girl to have forgotten you—or to have ever forgotten herself, in spite of Ethilton's charitable opinion," I answered.

"I will go," he said, flinging his cigar into the fire. "I will go; and, by Jove! I feel so happy now that I've made up my mind. Of course I ought to go; and I'll start to-morrow morning—at least, it seems so rude to you, old fellow, when you've just come down——"

"Not at all," I said, and meant it; though, for the matter of that it is the only reply to such a speech possible under any circumstances. "I'll go up with you, if you like."

"Don't you mind, really? I can't tell you how much obliged I shall be. Do you know where she is?"

"Yes; I was in at rehearsal at the Prince's a day or two ago. She was going to play in the new *opera bouffe*."

"A part?" he asked.

"Two lines, I think, and about five bars of recitative. There were thirteen people in the boxes and nearly two rows of stalls the other night, and such good business nearly turned Manley's head, and he put a new piece into rehearsal at once."

"There's a train at half-past ten, if that's not too early for you," he said, very eager to be off, now that he had decided to go.

"Not at all; and, as it's nearly twelve, I think I'll retire. Good night!—whatever are you thanking me for? Good night! and good luck in this and everything."

A servant brought up a very early message next morning that Sandering was up, and waiting for me to breakfast with him; and the dog-cart to take us to the station was at the door some twenty minutes earlier than was necessary.

We arrived in town about two o'clock, and hastened to the theatre, where rehearsal was busily proceeding. Sandering's heart slightly failed here, and I left him in the neighbouring square while I went to find Nelly Burton, and tell her that he was waiting to see her.

I made my way up the little dark staircase, and paused at the back of the half-lighted stage to take in the scene.

The ladies of the establishment, gorgeously arrayed and highly bejewelled, were seated in a semi-circle, receiving, with some shrugging of shoulders, the verdict of the leader of the band that there was very little improvement yet in the repetition of a chorus, and that it must go a good deal better before it would do. He was a vulgar person, and of bad manners, for he ventured to say that some of the soprani were very flat and quite out of tune.

Two of the men were bitterly quarrelling with each other in the most polite tones, as to what business should or should not be introduced into the scenes they had together.

One of the principal ladies was going through a speech to which the author listened with a badly-concealed expression of contemptuous dismay; but he did not interfere, for he had written pieces before and knew the actress and her ability, and so sorrowfully resigned another of his best points and a good joke, fervently hoping that the next good part he wrote would be cast for a lady who had at any rate a little idea of reading, speaking, and understanding simple sentences in her native tongue.

Barkington, the stage-manager, who worked sixteen hours a day, and did as much as sixteen people, was bustling busily to and fro.

The manager, surrounded by some of his company, was examining a brilliant poster containing all the hues of the rainbow, in addition to several which no well-conducted rainbow ever dreamt of assuming, destined soon to blaze out and illuminate a thousand walls. But posters won't make pieces, charm the printers and lithographers never so wisely.

I soon caught sight of Nelly Burton, whose fresh, honest little face formed a striking contrast to some of those around her—harsh, *blasé*, and coarse in expression as many of them were. Her trim little jacket had been worn before, and the newness had left the hat which was perched on the top of her fair curls; but she was very pleasant to look at.

"Are you busy?" I asked, when she had arched her interrogative eyebrows more than ever, and given me a very nice little hand to shake, on ascertaining that it was I.

"I have to sing all this, directly," she answered, smiling as she held out a sheet of music-paper with a very few bars scribbled on the top. "They are going over that scene again?"

"Not without cause, I think. Miss Shaftesbury does not seem to know much of her part, nor to play what she does know particularly well; and she certainly can't sing the music," I said.

Kind little Nelly wanted to find an excuse for her directly.

"Well, you see, it's rather an awkward part to play," she urged.

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"Then the author's intention will be thoroughly realised, for she's certain to play it awkwardly. I came here on purpose to find you, Miss Burton. A friend of mine, and of yours, wants very much indeed to see you," I said, taking her a little apart. "Can you guess who it is?"

Her lips said "No," but her face very plainly said "Yes."

"It is Clement Sandering," I continued.

"I can't imagine what Mr. Sandering can wish to see me for," she replied, with an effort at haughtiness which did not much accord with the eager way she glanced round to see if he were near, as she asked, "Where is he?"

"In the square; waiting very anxiously to see you," I said.

"I am quite at a loss to understand what Mr. Sandering can have to say to me. Will you please ask him to write if there really is anything?" she answered.

"To a certain extent, Miss Burton, I am in Clement's confidence; and if I were not, your tone would lead me to think—several things."

"I am sure my tone is just the same as always," she said, looking up with a faint twinkling as of coming tears in her ordinarily bright eyes. "Mr. Sandering is nothing to me, and I had rather not see him."

"Of course, if you had rather not, there is no more to be said; but he will be greatly pained and hurt at your refusal—your unkind refusal, for he came all the way from Staverton this morning on purpose to see you. I did not think that you would ever have condemned anyone without hearing the defence. Circumstantial evidence is so terribly deceptive," I rejoined.

She did not in the least know what to do, and so tried to be angry, and rolled up her sheet of music without the slightest regard for the legibility of the writing.

"Well, good-bye, Miss Burton; I will say that you are too angry to forgive him, shall I?"

"There's nothing to forgive, and I'm not angry a bit," she said, quite as savagely as it was possible for her to speak.

"What is the word?" I answered, repressing a slight inclination to smile. "Annoyed—hurt—vexed—grieved—disappointed? There is evidently something wrong between you, for you and he were excellent friends when his play was produced.

"If you see him, in three seconds he will probably explain away—whatever requires explanation, and then you will be very sorry that you hesitated in hearing him."

She unrolled her music, and studied the signature at the beginning of the stave with great diligence.

"My cue will be coming directly," she said at length.

"And then you'll see poor Clement?" I asked.

"Indeed I don't know why you call him 'poor Clement,'" but she lingered over his name, and seemed to like the sound of it; "he's not—— Yes, I'll go, if you don't mind waiting a minute more," and she went down the stage, did her scrap of duty, and then we left the theatre together.

Sandering was coming towards us as we turned into the square. He threw away his cigar, and raised his hat as I left Miss Burton and retired; he seeming uncertain whether or not to offer his hand, for her obstinate little paws were tightly holding her parasol.

I looked after them, however, when they had gone a little way, and saw one hand slowly relax its grip and resign itself for a moment to Sandering's custody, anticipatory of its retention for a very much longer period; and when presently they overtook me, a glance convinced me that all was right. Nelly Burton appeared well on her way to making a good match.

* * * * *

The future Mrs. Sandering lived in rooms up a good many stairs in one of the streets which surround Russell Square; and thither I used sometimes to accompany my friend; when our pretty hostess regaled us with cups of tea, and sang songs to us at a tinkling little piano which tried strenuously to be gay and festive, and make good music, but whose age and decrepitude would sometimes assert themselves by the sudden cessation of a note or so, which grew tired and refused to speak any more.

Here, too, we examined her drawings—she was a very clever little person, and sketched admirably—and looked over the precious volume in which were pasted the newspaper cuttings criticising her performances; mostly from country chronicles, though there were nearly two lines from a London morning paper which had afforded her so vast an amount of pleasure, that if the writer had but known the gratification his pen was destined to give, I believe he would have defied his editor and put in half a column.

On one of these afternoons, about a week after our arrival in town, we were looking over a portfolio of sketches, and Sandering was amusing himself by chaffing the drawings to tease Nelly.

"The only suggestion I have to offer," he said, putting a sketch on the mantelpiece and looking at it with the burlesqued air of a connoisseur, "is that a body should put titles and explanatory notes to her drawings; because a body is apt to be misunderstood."

"I wish you wouldn't keep on teasing me about saying 'a body,' just because I used the expression once," she said, spoiling a laugh with a pretended pout.

**"The only suggestion I have to offer," he said, pointing to the sketch, "is that a body should put explanatory notes to her drawings."**

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"You should be very careful what expression you make use of, for you want all you can muster to put into these works of art, dear. Now, here's a strange picture; very charming, very interesting, but just a trifle vague," he said, selecting another from the case.

"A gentleman, seated in a—a box carried by two elliptic wheels, and drawn by a—by an anomalous quadruped, which my slender knowledge of natural history will not permit me safely to—— A horse, is it? Really a horse? Well, we'll call it a horse, at any rate, if only for the sake of, or rather the avoidance of, argument—drawn by a horse.

The gentleman is engaged in emulating the example of Simple Simon in the ballad, and fishing as he goes along the turnpike road—*driving!*—do you seriously mean it? Very well, dear, you drew it, and so you ought to know; but why a man should go out driving with a fishing-rod in his hand, I—a *whip?* Oh, no; come now, Nelly, dear, that is going a little too far; really it is only as a personal favour to you that I can consent for a moment to accept that as a whip. Men don't hold their whips jutting over their horses' backs like bowsprits, and it quite bears out my premises that explanatory notes should be appended to these works of art."

Nelly showed a disposition to attempt the recovery of her much-abused work; but Sandering was on the alert, and resumed—

"He is driving (if you really do insist upon it) up a hill towards a church of ingeniously-assorted architecture, about which I will only say that if the incumbent is not more upright as a man than the steeple is as a building, the heads and morals of the congregation are in some danger. You are quite sure that is a horse?"

"What a shame!" Nelly said laughingly. "I'm sure it's all quite plain enough."

"Quite *plain* enough, in all conscience—you might almost go so far as to call it *ugly*," Sandering replied.

"You may think so, if you like, sir. I'm sure the church is upright, and my uncle was incumbent—at least, curate there," Nelly said, looking at the drawing.

"Why, I never knew that you had an uncle, dear. What's his name, and where does he live?" he asked.

"He lives abroad, and I don't write to him much—he wouldn't like my being in the profession. He's very kind, though, and used to want me to go and live with him, only I didn't. Hedley, his name is."

"What Hedley—not Robert, I suppose?" Sandering asked.

"Yes, it is Robert. How did you guess?" inquired Nelly.

"You don't mean to say that this is Chesterton Church?" Sandering said in a tone of extreme surprise.

"Yes, it is," Nelly answered, evidently bewildered at his knowledge.

"But surely, Nelly, Robert Hedley, who was curate of Chesterton in the seventies, was not your uncle?"

"Not only was, but is. Why are you so excited about it, dear?" she asked.

"Don't you know that—have you not heard of his death Nelly?" he inquired.

"No, indeed I haven't," Nelly replied.

"Poor little girl! I ought not to have mentioned it so suddenly. He died last year."

Nelly laughed. "Then all I can say is, that he has since been represented by a wonderfully healthy-looking ghost. I have not seen him lately, but two or three times since then; and I shall most likely have a letter from him—or the ghost—to-morrow morning. I wrote the other day, the first letter for a long time, to tell him about—about us," she said.

"My dear child, if you are not joking, there must be a very great mistake somewhere. Do you know that if Robert Hedley were alive he would inherit Staverton Towers? But he *must* be dead. I have every proof of it. You know," he said, turning to me, "it was chiefly to ascertain this that I went to Paris. He *must* be dead."

Nelly persisted, however. He had lived in Paris, years ago, she said, but was now minister to a little Protestant community in the South of France, and such, on investigation, turned out to be the case. A Robert Hedley, a clergyman, corresponding apparently in other particulars, had died in Paris; but we had the best reasons for assuring ourselves that it was not he.

An extract from one of his letters to his niece will best finish my story.

"——let Mr. Sandering, then, resume his occupation of the Towers without scruple; convinced that I should but be unhappy in leaving my work here, and adopting a new life, at my advanced age. You are my only relative, and if I have power to dispose of the property at my death, it will be yours; if not, it appears that your husband would inherit it."

Sandering talked nonsense at first about having asked Nelly to marry him under false pretences, and it being his duty to free her from the engagement; but she appears much to prefer her bondage, and impudently asserts that if he did go away, he would only want to come back again as he had done before.

Of course, Sandering scoffed at this remark—what else could he do?—but, all the same, he knew that what she said was quite true.

There is some question of entail which the lawyers have not yet decided, and, indeed, I believe they have not been requested to do so; but, under any circumstances, there seems every probability that it will turn out to be a good match.

**Alfred E. T. Watson.**

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"What are you doing, Tommy?" "Standing before the looking-glass," said Tommy. "I wanted to see how I would look if I was twins."

Teacher: "Now, here is an example in mental arithmetic: How old would a person be to-day who was born in 1868?" Pupil: "Please, mum, was it a man or a woman?"

Jones: "Look here, Smith, when you asked me to lend you that half-sovereign, two months ago, you said you only wanted it for a short time." Smith: "Quite true; I only had it half-an-hour."

"You shouldn't be so restless in church, Charlie," said the minister to his little son. "I could see you moving and jumping about in the pew all through my sermon." "I was stiller'n you were, papa," answered Charlie. "You was wavin' your arms and talkin' all through church."

Tom: "How cold that pretty Miss Jones does look, Bob. She ought to have something round her!" Bob (absent-mindedly): "She will have as soon as it gets dark."

Conwigger: "Didn't you think it rather foolish for her to ask you if her hat were on straight?" Merritt: "No. It was in a railway train, and we had just come out of a long tunnel."

Guest: "How is this? My bill this time is 12s. a day, and last December I had the same room and it was only 10s. a day?" Clerk: "Yes, I know; but the days are much longer now."

Young Man (to messenger boy): "What did the young lady say when you gave her the flowers?" Messenger Boy: "She asked the young fellow who was sitting in the porch with her it if he didn't want some for a buttonhole."

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# BRAND NEW COMPETITION. Starts To-day.

**Cash Down. Cash Down. Cash Down.**

## 1st Prize, £50. 2nd Prize, £25. 3rd Prize, £10.

**and 25 Gramophones.**

**THIS IS AN ENTIRELY NEW COMPETITION AND IS NOW PLACED BEFORE THE PUBLIC FOR THE FIRST TIME. IT IS EXCEEDINGLY SIMPLE, AND IS OPEN TO EVERY PERSON WHO READS "SHORT STORIES."**

### WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO.

Below will be found six paragraphs containing the buried names of Railway Stations in the United Kingdom (or words that sound the same as the names). You must write in the spaces given the names of the Railway Stations so indicated.

No word or part of a word may be used more than once in making up the name of a Railway Station. In the event of the name of a Railway Station occurring more than once in a sentence, it should be underlined and written down each time.

When you have discovered the names of Railway Stations in the sentences, underline (in ink) the words which go to make up the names (or words that sound the same as the names) and then on the line underneath each sentence write (in ink) the correct names of the Railway Stations to be found in each.

All the names will be found in the Index to Railway Staticns in the January edition of Bradshaw's Guide. Should you be unable to obtain a copy of this Guide, a reprint of the Index will be sent to you for three penny stamps on application to *Bradshaw's Guide*, 59 Fleet Street, London, E.C.; or Room Eight, SHORT STORIES, 17 and 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

*The names of the Railway Stations consist of one word or two or more consecutive words, or consecutive parts of one word, or two or more consecutive words.*

The first prize of £50 will be given to the Competitor who fills in the greatest number of railway stations under the conditions stated.

The second prize of £25 will go to the person who fills in the next greatest number, and the other prizes will be awarded in the order of merit.

When you have filled up all the names you can find, cut out the list below and keep it by you. Don't on any account send it to us until the closing date is announced in SHORT STORIES. A second list of sentences will appear next week.

In the event of a tie a further list (or, if necessary, several further lists) of sentences will be submitted to the tieing competitors until one wins the first prize outright.

**CUT THROUGH HERE**

### EXAMPLE.

**The oaks were swaying in the breeze, the cows were grazing peacefully, when out of the park tore a huge black bull.**

The Oaks, Sway, Cowes, Grays, Park, Black Bull.

### FIRST LIST.

1. Over the hill gay with heather came the seven sisters munching sandwiches.

.....

2. I do wish you would come with me to the East-end on Monday, Brooke and Hockley have promised to come.

.....

3. They pressed on, panting for breath, until they reached the place where the five ways met.

.....

4. To obtain admittance we had to knock long and loud, and when the door was opened the sight that met our gaze made us rush away and hide ourselves.

.....

5. The halfway house was an inn named the Horse and Jockey. They knew full well that it was nowhere near the fishponds, but it was useless to ask them why they went there.

.....

6. Let it lie. It will get washed over the waterfall and on to the sandy banks of the river where we can pick it up.

.....

**NAME**..... **ADDRESS**.....

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GREAT NEW SERIES. YOU CAN BEGIN HERE.

# Confessions of a Self-made Girl

*The writer of these Confessions relates in this series of articles the true story of her life, from the time when she left Cornwall, an unsophisticated but ambitious girl, until she made her name and fortune. Her name is well known to you.*

[*For the purposes of these Confessions I am calling myself Maud Cardew, as my real name is too well known for me to wish to make the story of my life public in this manner.*]

## MY HEART'S DESIRE.

I AM a native of a seaside village in Cornwall. As I grew up I began to tire of the monotony of the life and determined to go out into the world and make a name for myself.

One day when I was in the ruins of the Old Keep, which is on the cliffs, meditating upon what I should do were I free to carve out my own destiny, two strangers appeared—evidently tourists, I thought. They told me they had decided to stay in the neighbourhood for a few days, and asked if I knew of any lodgings. I said that my father would be glad to put them up at the farm, and accordingly they came home with me.

Their names were the Honourable Robert Lestrange (commonly called Bobbie) and Di Northcote.

I told these two Londoners of my desire to see the world. Bobbie encouraged me in my ambitions, but Di advised me to stay at home. This, however, was not at all in my line, as I told him, and when he saw that nothing would shake me from my resolve, he promised to try to find something for me to do when I arrived in the great city.

Bobbie met me on my arrival in London. Owing to a fog we got separated, and as I stood on the steps of a house I heard a man's voice asking me to come inside and wait until the fog cleared. Feeling that it would be hopeless to find Bobbie, I accepted the invitation. I remained there some time when Di happened to call, and he took me to my lodgings in Bloomsbury, where Bobbie was waiting; he told me that the man in whose rooms I had been was Lord Cecil Trevor, one of the worst "men about town."

Di came in next morning to tell me he had found me a place as trier-on in the firm of Philips and Philips, mantle and jacket makers. He also gave me some advice which I rather resented. I didn't like my work at all, and as I felt I ought not to live alone I got Lizzie Brown, a new girl, to share rooms with me.

I met Lord Cecil Trevor again at a dance of the employees of Philips and Philips—he was a friend of young Fred Philips. He was just about to see me into a cab after the dance when Di Northcote came up, with an angry gleam in his eyes such as I had never seen there before.

## I FALL OUT WITH DI.

I AM bound to confess Cecil Trevor showed great presence of mind. There was an odd expression on his face, but he did not get angry at all.

"Miss Cardew has just given me permission to see her home," he said, quite affably, ignoring Di's studied rudeness.

"Thank you," said the latter curtly, "but as I am going in her direction we need not trouble you."

Lord Cecil hesitated a moment, glancing from one to the other of us; then I suppose he realised that Di was determined to accompany me at any cost, and that it would be wisest to seem to withdraw with a good grace.

He turned to me.

"I am sorry," he said purposely throwing a good deal of feeling into his voice, "but I hope I shall soon have the pleasure of seeing you again. I have had a delightful evening."

Ever since Di addressed me I had been standing very upright, with my head thrown back a little, and a studied expression of careless disdain. Now I held out my hand instantly to Cecil Trevor, and smiled up into his face.

"Oh, yes, I hope so," I said warmly; "I have enjoyed myself very much."

He pressed my hand, looked hard into my eyes, then bowed and walked away.

Di at once held out his hand to help me into the hansom.

"Will you kindly direct the driver?" I said frigidly, and ignoring his extended arm, stepped into the hansom, and seated myself in the middle of the seat.

Di coolly mounted the step.

"Which side shall I sit?" he asked.

"Outside," I replied, staring straight in front of me.

"It is too cold," he answered, suppressing a smile. "If you don't make room for me I'm afraid I shall crush you."

I moved to one side and we drove away in silence. He spoke to me a few times, but as I only answered shortly, he soon left off. At the door he asked for my latch-key, but I took it from my pocket and fitted it into the latch myself; afterwards entering and closing the door behind me with merely a "good-night."

The next evening I was rather surprised to find him waiting for me outside Philips and Philips. He asked me to go to dinner with him at once, and I declined, starting to walk homewards.

Without the least hesitation he accompanied me, and in spite of my soreness, I could not help admiring his cool persistence. He talked to me all the way on topics of the day, not in the least nonplussed by my unappreciative replies;

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and when we reached my door, he asked if he might come in.

I shrugged my shoulders and he followed me, closing the sitting-room door behind us, and placing his hat and stick on a chair. Lizzie was spending the evening with friends, so we were quite alone.

"Now," he began, "let us have it out and done with."

I stood by the chimney-piece carelessly unbuttoning my gloves, and made no reply.

"Of course you can't keep this up indefinitely," he continued. "Anyhow, I don't intend to let you."

I turned on him then.

"Mr. Northcote," I exclaimed warmly, "once for all, let me tell you I will not allow you to assume this right of command over me. I am absolutely free and independent, and I wish you to understand I intend to remain so."

He was too much of a gentleman to throw his previous help into my face, and only replied quietly:

"Most certainly. I have not the slightest wish to interfere with your independence, but at the same time, since I was partly instrumental in your coming to London at all, I intend to act as guardian to you whether you wish it or not, especially when such a man as Cecil Trevor is in the question. Once more I tell you, he is not a fit companion for any self-respecting girl."

I was silent, but inwardly determined to choose my friends for myself.

He gazed into the fire for a few minutes, still perfectly calm and serene. I watched him, and there grew up in my heart that determination to make him *feel*, which afterwards ruled so much of my intercourse with him.

I saw in him then, by a kind of divination, just the man he was. The brilliant scholar, the fascinating companion if he chose, the far-seeing, unerring judge, with each trait carefully hidden away beneath a crust of cynical indifference with which he purposely misled the greater part of the world.

I do not mean that I saw everything clearly then, but I realised he was not the man he chose to appear, and unconsciously I pitted all my own share of character and insight against that other, hidden part of him to force it to the surface.

When at last he looked up from the fire, he regarded me a moment critically.

"I see it is not much use expostulating," he said. "You will have to cut your wisdom teeth your own way, and I shall have to look after you in mine. However, I will leave you an address, and if ever you are in a difficulty and send for me I will come at once."

He took a card from his pocket-book and laid it on the chimney-piece.

Then he turned to the door.

"Good-bye," he said simply, and without offering to shake hands or giving me a chance to thank him, walked out.

I picked up the card and read:

Mr. Reginald Northcote,
Thatched House Club.

I fingered it a few moments thinking it was rather good of him not to leave me to go my own way to destruction without caring, then rang the bell for supper.

It was some time in coming, for though the landlady looked after us all right, she never hurried herself on my account, and always behaved with an easy familiarity that made me think she had not a very high opinion of me.

This was very unpleasant to me, but I did not know how to help myself, and dreaded hunting for fresh rooms.

She was particularly familiar that evening, and when at last I sat down to my solitary meal, I felt homesick and depressed.

It was all very well to come to London to be a brilliant success; but it was another thing to live in a dingy lodging, waited on by a familiar landlady, with no prospects much beyond trying on jackets for highty-tighty young ladies.

I had been low-spirited several times through disappointment, but I remember I was particularly so that evening, and my inward greyness coloured everything about me with dull monotony.

Just when I was on the verge of a little weep, there was a ring at the front door, and the next moment my landlady entered with some beautiful flowers.

"For you," she said. "My, ain't they beautiful!" And she stood and gazed at them open-mouthed.

"Who brought them?" I asked, with a pleasant glow of surprise.

"A messinger b'y. 'Ere's a card in a henvelope as come with 'em."

I tore open the envelope, expecting to find it was a peace offering from Di.

When I read: "With Cecil Trevor's compliments," I felt my cheeks flush a little.

On the back of the card was scribbled: "Please look out for me when you leave to-morrow. I want to see you particularly."

"Will you bring me some water for them?" I said, and replaced the card in the envelope.

All the next day I wrestled with myself as to whether I should meet him, or purposely avoid him. I had not the least doubt as to what I ought to do, but my inclinations led in the opposite direction.

The fact was, I was still dull and lonely. I did not care for the other girls, with the exception of Lizzie Brown, and she was rather a bore at times; I was weary to death of my occupation, and I dreaded going home to sit alone, for Lizzie was very often late at the shop, not reaching home much before ten. In which confession lies the nucleus of cause for half the downfalls in a big city.

While I was still hesitating one of the girls was very rude to me, and all the others laughed. I don't think they meant to be unkind, but I believe they were jealous, for though I neither wished it nor encouraged it in the least, the shop-walker of the mantle department never missed an opportunity of a few words with me.

I lost my temper and answered back hotly, which resulted in a little scene. Finally, feeling tired and miserable, I put on my hat, and went out to meet Cecil Trevor.

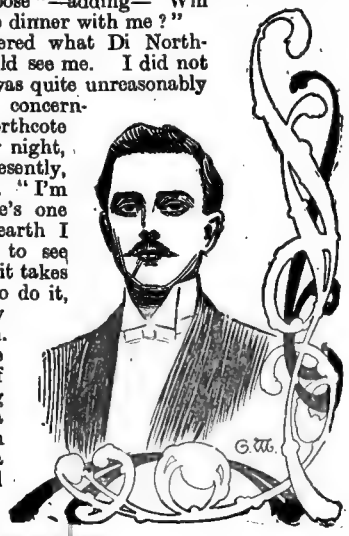
He was waiting for me, and greeted me with unmistakable pleasure. I did not exactly reciprocate it, but I liked being appreciated again, and began immediately to feel on better terms with myself.

My depression had fortunately not cowed me in the least, however, and I was quickly on the defensive.

"How good of you to come!" he said, and I replied carelessly; "I had nothing better to do, that's why."

He frowned slightly, and remarked: "Then I must thank my good fortune I suppose"—adding—"Will you come and have some dinner with me?"

I assented, and wondered what Di Northcote would say if he could see me. I did not mind much because I was quite unreasonably prejudiced against him concerning Cecil Trevor. "Northcote was fairly riled the other night, wasn't he?" he said presently, with a look of amusement. "I'm awfully glad. If there's one thing in Heaven and earth I thoroughly enjoy, it's to see Northcote put out; but it takes such a dickens of a lot to do it, it's a pleasure one only gets once in a blue moon. I've seen that fellow smile in that sickening way of his at the most insulting remarks, and never turn a hair; and however much you may hate him, it is a hundred to one you will never have the satisfaction of annoying him."



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"Why do you hate him?" I asked.

"Domineering, insolent brute," he muttered; "fancies himself formed of some special clay, superior to all the rest of humanity. I should like to know by what right he treats you as a child?"

"He doesn't!" I exclaimed warmly. "He only tries to, but he will never succeed."

I was too engrossed in making this plain to observe an expression of triumph steal over my companion's face; though I had reason afterwards to know that he was purposely attempting to incense me against Di. I had not even the sense to see then that I was playing straight into his hand.

"That's right," he said; "don't go under to him whatever you do. You'd never get free of him again. I'm not going to give the chap away, because it's a beastly, low-down game, I think; but I tell you plainly, he will get you under his thumb if he can.

"He hates above everything to be thwarted, and if anyone disputes his sway, especially a woman, he never rests until he has conquered them."

"Or they him," I remarked meaningly.

"You won't do that," he answered; "it's an impossibility. He's like an adamantine rock. Every woman who has tried to move him, has either given it up or gone to pieces in the attempt. If you take my advice you'll just drop him altogether."

I realised dimly the utter futility of such advice if Di did not choose to be dropped, but I only said:

"Was he ever in love at all, do you know?"

"Oh, yes, there is a story, but it was when he was a very young chap. He was heir to a dukedom, you know, through a second cousin, and he got engaged to a beautiful girl at Oxford.

"Then a nearer relative turned up from Australia, and he remained plain Mr. Northcote, and the girl dropped him. He believed in her, silly young fool, and it was such a shock to him he's never been the same again."

"Did she manage to get the real duke?" I asked.

"No," he told me, "there was a mystery about the chap. He turned up from Australia, proved his identity, claimed his dukedom, and vanished again. I believe he has never been to England since."

"Then he might just as well have stopped away," I said; "and let Mr. Northcote have his bride."

"Yes, but chaps don't throw dukedoms about, even if they don't care for them at the time. I daresay he thinks it may come in useful some day."

We went into a quiet restaurant for dinner, but even there I was conscious that we attracted a good deal of attention; but whether it was I or my companion that caused it I did not know.

It was a very pleasant meal, for he entertained me with descriptions of high life which interested me vastly. After dinner, however, he proposed going to his rooms.

I refused at once, and said I would go home. He remarked questioningly that he supposed he mustn't come with me, and I said "No, certainly not."

"Why?" he asked, and I did not know what to answer.

"Does Northcote come?" he went on, and I was obliged to confess that he did.

"And Lestrange as well?"

Again I had to say "Yes," and he asked at once: "Then why can't I come?"

"They are old friends," I asserted, stretching a few weeks into a few years to suit my convenience; "perhaps some day you may come."

"It might just as well be now," he urged. "We could have such a nice chat, and it is so difficult anywhere else. Come—let me call a hansom?"

"No, no," I exclaimed vehemently, remembering Di's warnings.

"If you will promise not to worry," I added; "I will walk all the way with you now."

He had to be content with that, and we started off leisurely.

"What on earth possessed you to go to Philips and Philips?" he asked presently.

"Mr. Northcote arranged it," I said; "but I don't like it at all."

"I should think not"—with emphasis—"you are absolutely thrown away there. You ought to go on the stage; you'd soon go to the top and make a fortune."

I caught my breath eagerly and looked up at him.

"Oh, do you think I should?" I exclaimed.

"I'm sure of it," he answered; "I can't imagine why you didn't start long ago."

"I should love it," I ran on with the same eagerness; "but I'm afraid I shouldn't be any good."

"Nonsense. My dear girl, beauty is half the battle, and you are fully equipped."

"But if I gave up my post at Philips and Philips and did not earn anything on the stage, I should be penniless," I said anxiously.

"That need not worry you," he answered at once, and I fancied he seemed pleased at the idea. "I'll see that you don't starve. I could offer you a nice easy post as bachelor's companion, or secretary by day, you know," and he tried to get hold of my hand, looking closely into my face.

I drew aside instantly.

"You are trespassing," I said. "Remember our compact."

He frowned, and then gave a little confused laugh.

"You're as hard as a stone," he remarked; "and not a bit kind to a fellow. However, I'll have to go on liking you because I can't help it. If you wish I'll get you an introduction to a theatre-manager. He'll let you do something for a start, if it's only to walk on, if I ask him."

"Oh, thank you," I cried delightedly. "I'd love to try. It's just deadly, messing about with those mantles all day. Will you see about it to-morrow?"

He promised, and it was with feelings of suppressed excitement, I said "Good-bye," and went into my home.

It was with great trepidation, however, I presented myself for my first interview with the manager of The Queen's Theatre.

Lord Cecil had arranged it all, and taken good care, I was bound to see, that our negotiations over it should be verbal. He absolutely refused to write anything, insisting instead upon my meeting him.

I did not altogether like it, but felt I had no choice if I wished to go on the stage; and undoubtedly I did. The consequence was that I saw a good deal of him, and it took me all my time to keep him at arm's length.

When I entered the manager's office, one of his first remarks was: "I suppose you are very friendly with Lord Cecil Trevor?"

Something about his way of saying it, made me grow very hot, and I replied indignantly—"No, I am not. I only know him slightly."

"So—so——" he said significantly, and, narrowing his eyes, looked me up and down in a way that made me want to run away and hide.

I should not like to imply that this particular manager was in the least an example of his class; and I am obliged to confess, what I have learnt more fully since, that the mere fact of my being introduced by Lord Cecil was sufficient to make him adopt towards me his tone of that first interview.

"How tall are you?" he asked next; "would you mind standing up?"

I stood up, and again he took stock of me generally.

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"Umph——" he remarked approvingly; "you're a fine woman."

I felt furious, and doubtless showed it, for he added in a conciliatory tone. "Now, don't get angry. If you want to go into the theatrical profession you must put up with its ways. It's no use being too thin-skinned; and if you're going to be very straight-laced it's no good your coming to this theatre, because you'll never get on."

I bit my lips hard and said nothing; for I was then under the impression that Lord Cecil's introduction was of great account to me, whereas it really made no difference at all, and the part I was afterwards given, my appearance would easily have secured for me.

"Now," he continued coolly; "let me see what sort of a neck and arms you have."

"I will not!" I exclaimed instantly; "I never heard of such a thing. Have I come here simply to be insulted?"

"My dear young lady," he said; "now don't go into a tantrum. Most of the girls I am in the habit of receiving for such an interview as this usually raise no objections. That is why I asked you."

I daresay I looked rather well as I stood before him, burning with indignation, for I have always found when I get angry I provoke admiration, whether my companion would or no.

Anyhow, after a few minutes he added: "I think you'll do all right. You can walk on for a few weeks as a trial, and then, if I can manage it, I will give you a part. You will receive twenty-one shillings a week, and your dress will be found for you. You can begin to-night if you like."

I thanked him and explained that I must give a week's notice at Philips and Philips, so it was decided I should begin that day week.

I went home feeling very pleased in spite of the unpleasant interview, and not a little of my rejoicing was at the thought of what Di's feelings might be when he found out my changed plans.

The poor salary did not trouble me in the least, as I was confident it would soon be raised, and meanwhile I could afford to spend some of my savings.

That evening Lord Cecil called at my lodgings without waiting for my permission when he was shown into the room, I looked up with both surprise and annoyance.

He held out his hand, but I drew back and looked at him in silence.

"Don't be angry," he said, "I want to know all about your interview with the manager, and I couldn't arrange to meet you earlier. It is an old saying that one good turn deserves another, so you might let me stay now I am here."

The contrast of his at once claiming an obligation compared with Di's careful ignoring of it, struck me unpleasantly; but since I had allowed him to help me I felt compelled to make the best of it.

"You may stay fifteen minutes," I said, and placed the clock in a better light. Needless to say when the fifteen minutes were up he easily found some plausible excuse to remain, but at last, in desperation, I told him he really must go without further delay.

In reply he only remarked, "I wish Northcote would drop in now. His face would be a picture. I should enjoy it for weeks."

"I wish he would also," I retaliated, "then you would be obliged to go."

He looked considerably amused.

"I like your cheek," he said, "it beats everything I ever knew. You are almost the only girl of my acquaintance who would not ask me to stay."

I drew myself up somewhat haughtily, and turning away, occupied myself with some flowers in a way that implied dismissal.

He stood astride on the rug and watched me a few moments.

"All the same I believe I like you for it," he said at last.

"I'm no saint, as doubtless Northcote has impressed upon you, and I admit I haven't much respect for your sex; but I like pluck, and you've got more than your share."

Still I stood with averted head trifling with my flowers.

"Look here, Maud," he began, advancing a step.

I turned at once and regarded him stonily.

"Miss Cardew, then, if you will. I'm going now. You'll part good friends, won't you?"

"Good-bye," I answered evasively.

"No, that won't do," he said. "You've got to shake hands with me, or I'll sit in that chair till morning."

I believed him capable of it, so coldly extended my hand.

"Good-bye," I said again. "Another time I hope you will wait until you are invited."

"I won't promise," he answered daringly; "I'm going to break you in, you know," and with an easy laugh he turned away.

Exactly as he opened my door the landlady opened the front door in answer to a ring we had not heard.

I do not know if Fate went out of her way in those days to guide Di Northcote to me at the most awkward moments, and purposely involve me in difficulties, but certainly she achieved it in a most remarkable fashion.

"Will you give this to Miss Cardew," said a voice I could not possibly mistake; and then Di looked up and saw Lord Cecil advancing from my room. Not a muscle of his face moved. He gave one quick glance, and then looked straight past him to where I stood under the light of the gas.

"Will you come in?" said the landlady, and he raised his voice slightly as he replied—

"No, thank you; I merely called to leave this book."

Then he turned and walked away.

Lord Cecil turned too, as if to come back, but I waved him aside.

"No," I said bitterly, "this is your fault. The least you can do is to go after him and explain."

He hesitated a moment, then asked—

"Do you wish me to?"

It was on the tip of my tongue to say "Yes," but a little demon of pride and wilfulness had time to take possession of me, and instead I tossed my head and remarked, "Oh, it is of no consequence."

When he had gone I stood for a long time staring into the fire.

"What will Di do now?" I kept saying to myself. "What will Di do now?"

**(Next Tuesday I will tell you what Di did.)**

---

"Why will Brown have nothing but French dishes on his table?" "It's an idea of the governess, to make the children speak French in the household."

Father (who has been helping a son in his school work): "What did the teacher remark when you showed him the translation?" John: "He said I was getting more stupid every day."

Mother (indignantly): "What's that, you thoughtless child? You say you haven't taken all your nice presents round and shown them to the neighbours yet! What do you suppose I bought them for?"

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# A Tottering Pedestal.

## A TALE OF LOVE AND A MISUNDERSTANDING.

"Well, that is cheerful!" exclaimed the assistant editor, as he hung up the telephone receiver with a jerk. "Mr. Allen is ill, and probably cannot come down for several days," he added, turning to where Natalie stood, pulling off her gloves.

"Ill?" she echoed blankly. "Ill? Is it anything serious? Who telephoned?"

"Dr. Porter; he didn't say what the trouble was, but it would take more than a headache to keep the boss at home. He has been working like all possessed lately, you know."

Indeed she knew—who better? Had she not seen him there in the harness day after day, anxiously watching him grow haggard and worn under the extra strain which a sudden break in his staff had put upon him? Had she not longed, mutely, rebelliously, to be able to lift even a little of the load from his overburdened shoulders?

Mechanically she sat down at her desk, trying to begin her work. There was a mist before her eyes, an inexplicable lump in her throat, and instead of her papers, she saw before her the editor's strong, self-contained face. Was he being well cared for, she wondered; was everything possible being done for him? Even while she realised the absurdity of such questions, they persistently recurred to her.

Of Mr. Allen's private life she knew no detail; in the office she attended strictly to her business, and outside of it had no intercourse with any of her associates there. From chance remarks which Mr. Allen had made she knew that he had been through the mill, attaining his present position, while still a young man, by the most persistent sort of hard work.

"Oh, I've slaved and starved, and all the rest of it!" he told her once, half-jestingly, but there was a ring of truth through the lighter strain that made her wince.

Daily she had marvelled at the power of the man; his alert, decisive mastery of emergencies; his ever-ready courteous appreciation; his patient, tactful handling of the innumerable nameless worries, the never-ceasing, varying demands that go to make up the sum of an editor's existence, were all revelations to her.

His up-hill fight had not embittered him or made him unmindful of the struggles of others. When Natalie, utterly inexperienced, came to him, he held out a helping hand, showing her kindness where she had expected rebuffs, considerations wherever consideration was possible. She thought that all editors were like him, and could not understand why anyone should try to dissuade a girl from "breaking in" to newspaper work. Nothing that she could ever do for him could adequately express her gratitude.

So this morning she pulled herself together and went to work with a will; now, if ever, was the time to put forth every effort, that their editor's part of the great news machine might be kept in smooth working order for him. There was little rest for anyone in the office that day.

Late in the afternoon the doctor telephoned again. Mr. Allen, he said, was worrying greatly about his business, and someone from the office must come to him, and be sure to say that everything was all right, as the patient was in no condition to be disturbed about anything.

The assistant looked round perplexedly.

"I'm afraid I shall have to ask you to go, Miss Spencer," he said. "I simply can't spare one of the men."

Natalie succeeded in veiling the eagerness of her assent. How glad she was to go; to see for herself just how he fared, and have her tormenting doubts dispelled.

When she reached Allen's residence Dr. Porter admitted her, saying that the family were all away.

"As luck would have it, it is even his man's day out, and he would not hear of the fellow staying at home with him. He'll kill himself yet trying to be kind to people," fumed the little doctor, who was Allen's friend as well as physician.

"You think he is very ill?" Natalie faltered.

"He will need considerable care," was the doctor's non-committal reply, as he led Natalie into an inner room where Allen lay tossing restlessly, his eyes unnaturally bright, his face flushed, his fingers pulling nervously at the coverlet. Although he managed to speak with some of his wonted alertness, Natalie's watchful eyes detected his suffering.

"It was a shame for them to trouble you to come to me," was his first remark. Then he listened with satisfaction to what she had to say, and told her clearly and concisely what he wanted done; but the strain told. As she left him he sank back very limply among his pillows.

"He will rest for a time now," Dr. Porter said, when Natalie rejoined him. "Still, I hate awfully to leave him alone."

"You are going, too?" Natalie asked quickly.

"Why, I don't see how I can help it. There is one patient whom I really must see—the others could wait. I have sent for a nurse—goodness knows why she does not come!" impatiently pulling out his watch.

"I'll stay here till she does come," said Natalie promptly.

"You're a little brick!" exclaimed the doctor delightedly. "I was just wondering if I might not ask you. I will be back in half an hour any way, and probably the nurse will be here before that," and, after giving her a few directions, he hurried away.

Returning to the sick room, Natalie slipped into a chair near the bedside, sitting quietly till Allen began to toss and moan. Then she bathed his hot head with some cool stuff the doctor had prepared. He opened his eyes for a moment, looking wonderingly at her, then lay still again.

When he woke once more he saw her still near him in the dim light.

"Natalie!" he said breathlessly.

She did not move or answer him, believing him to be only half awake.

"Natalie," he repeated; "am I dreaming, or is it really

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you?" There was no mistaking the eagerness in his manner. The blood surged to Natalie's cheeks at the sound of her name on his lips. Could he know what he was saying, to be thus calling her by name?

"Dr. Porter had to leave, so I am staying with you till he returns," she said unsteadily.

"I only wish that you would stay for ever!" he murmured. "Natalie! My Natalie!" catching her hand, and pulling her down till she sat on the edge of the bed, "do you know how much I love you? I never thought before that you cared anything for me, but you seem different to-night. Do you love me, Natalie?" capturing her other hand.

Natalie's heart beat tumultuously; how should she answer him? Did he really mean this—and for her?

"Answer me, Natalie," compelled the insistent voice from beside her. Well if he was delirious he would not remember; and if he knew—if he meant it——

"Oh, I do! I do!" she cried.

He crushed her hands to his burning lips.

"My love! my dearest!" he whispered, while his eyes made eloquent appeal to her. She leant down till her lips touched his brow. Smiling and still clasping her hands he dozed again, like a tired child.

Natalie felt that she had been suddenly snatched to some wonderful, beautiful world, wherein all was brightness and great glory. She slipped to her knees, laying her cheek softly against his hand.

"He loves me! he loves me!" trilled a voice in her soul, while she tried dizzily to form the words with her lips.

"I can love him as much as I want now!" she thought. 'And, oh, it's so good—it's so good!"

It seemed doubly so to her because there was no one else in all the world for whom she cared deeply. There were those for whom she felt affection, but not one whom she really loved. Now that the flood-gates were down, the long repressed emotions of her impulsive nature swept riotously through.

A sound in the outer hall brought her back to earth and she rose hurriedly from her knees, trying to free her hands without disturbing Allen. He only tightened his hold.

"You are not going?" he said plaintively.

"I must—I think the doctor has come back! Please let go my hands—dear!"

He kissed them again, then reluctantly did as she asked.

"Try not to worry about the office," she begged; "we will make things go right for you, if you will only do just as the doctor tells you."

"Oh, I'll be good!" he promised, "just so as to get rid of this fever and be able to kiss you, my Natalie."

With this promise to comfort her Natalie went home, tired and overwrought, with some work still to do; but happy, happy, happy.

During the days of anxiety and uncertainty which followed Natalie vainly wished that they would send her to him again from the office. It was so hard to glean tidings of him only through the reports of others, to have to show only a moderate solicitude in his progress.

When they said that he was to sit up, she decided after some hesitation to send him a note by the next person who went to him. No one who saw it would ever guess what a precious little missive it was—they would fancy it some dry old business communication.

"How was Mr. Allen?" Natalie asked, when the bearer returned.

"I did not see him, because the nurse said that his wife had just come home and was with him, and——"

But the sentence remained unfinished, for, at that point, Natalie suddenly dropped, a dead weight, into the astonished reporter's arms.

When she recovered consciousness they urged her to go home and rest, for she had done much extra work during Mr. Allen's absence. She refused steadily, with a white, miserable face, that they could not understand.

Dully she reasoned to herself that sometime she must take up the awful burden of life again, so she might as well begin at once. Through the recurring waves of despair that swept over her one fact alone seemed clear—

"*His wife was with him.*"

*His wife!*

Slowly another thought disentangled itself from the chaos of her mind—she had made some mistake that night. Her king, which, being interpreted, meant her editor, could do no wrong. Delirious, after all, he must have been, thinking her perhaps this very wife.

"My Natalie," seemed to echo back mockingly to her. Well, that must be his wife's name too. They had quarrelled perhaps—the marriage was not a happy one. All he had said seemed to indicate this, if there were any reason at all in his utterances. Those words that *she* had treasured so, that *she* had repeated to herself so often, so ecstatically. The note she had sent him. A horrible surge of shame brought the blood back to her pallid cheeks as this thought smote her. What, what would he think? There would be no room for doubt—he would know.

Thus her thoughts ran riotously, tumultuously, without sequence, one thing only repeating itself—*he* had meant no wrong. Hard as it was to reconcile all of his utterances with the theory of delirium, the mistake was, must have been, hers alone.

Slowly the day dragged on, till Natalie began to think with dread of the time when her work should be ended, and she alone with her tortured, miserable thoughts. She was ill-fitted to bear another stinging blow that came to her.

"Mrs. Allen wants to see Miss Spencer," an office boy announced abruptly, coming to her desk.

The room began to whirl again. "The note," she thought. That dreadful, tell-tale note. Bracing herself as best she could for the ordeal she went to the waiting-room, where a very beautiful woman met her cordially.

"Ah, he has not told her," thought Natalie. "That is like him. But why is she here?"

"Miss Spencer, Mr. Allen wants to see you particularly. He told me to stop and ask you to drive home with me," Mrs. Allen said.

Poor Natalie was at bay. This was practically a command from the editor, which she could hardly disregard.

"I cannot come just at present, Mrs. Allen," she managed to answer, "but will you say that I will be there soon?"

The idea of driving in his carriage beside his lovely wife was quite unbearable.

"Then I will call for you again, say, in half an hour. There are one or two errands that I shall be glad to do."

Even this crowning pain was to be heaped upon her it seemed, so, with breaking heart, Natalie endeavoured to consent graciously.

As they drove away together Mrs. Allen chatted brightly, frequently speaking of her husband, while Natalie inwardly writhed, wondering if she could go through with all of this ordeal. Now that the meeting with Allen was drawing so near she began to fear that she had over-estimated her strength. She should have refused to come at any cost.

"Stanley has told me how you stayed with him the first night he was ill," said Mrs. Allen suddenly, "it was so good of you."

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Then he remembered! Oh, this was too much. Natalie wanted to scream and smash the carriage windows as the pleasant voice continued:

"He said that you were the best nurse he had at all, and often when his fever was bad they say he called for Natalie!"

Natalie gasped. What manner of woman was this who could talk so lightly about her husband's calling for another woman? "Another woman!" That was she, Natalie Spencer—Natalie was not his wife's name—what he had said he meant for "Natalie," he remembered. He——

No, no, it could not be! Her dear love, her idol, this man of highest honour.

Before she could collect her thoughts they had reached the house.

"Why, child, you are white as a sheet," cried Mrs. Allen, as the light fell on Natalie's face, "you must have a glass of sherry before you see Stanley. He would think that I had not taken good care of you if he were to see you looking like that."

Natalie had become passive, so many shocks and conflicting emotions having benumbed her faculties. As she mechanically thanked Mrs. Allen, and drank the sherry, she rather believed that she was having a very bad nightmare. To be sure it was very real, but nightmares so often are.

"That's better; now go to Stanley," Mrs. Allen commanded, as she saw the blood slowly creeping back to the girl's cheeks. "He's in there," she continued, "nodding towards a carefully closed curtain, but making no attempt to lead the way. Vaguely wondering Natalie crossed the room, resolutely pushed aside the curtain, and entered the cosy den where Allen was sitting propped in an arm-chair.

He looked up eagerly, a glad light in his eyes. "My Natalie," he said softly, attempting to rise.

"Don't get up," she cried, running to him, even the anger that his words inspired swallowed up by her anxiety for him. As she reached his side he tried to take her hand, but she drew quickly away.

"How can you, how dare you?" she questioned miserably.

"Why, Natalie, what do you mean? 'Can, dare'—this to me?" he questioned, in blank amazement. "Was it all a dream after all—wasn't that night real, Natalie? And your note to-day?" With trembling fingers he pulled the little, crumpled missive from the pocket of his dressing-gown, and held it accusingly towards her.

"Oh, don't, don't," she moaned, not trusting herself to look at him. "I thought that you wanted me on business, or I should not have come. If you only sent for me to insult me——"

"Why should you accuse me of such a thing?" he began hotly. "Why are you torturing me like this, Natalie? I don't in the least understand," he ended helplessly.

Natalie pressed her hand to her head. Was she crazy or was he? Agonising doubt of him began to creep into her heart, benumbing her senses, even though his bewilderment seemed too real to be feigned.

"Do you suppose I knew about your wife?" she said, in a harsh whisper.

Allen grasped the arms of his chair and leant towards her.

"My *what?*" he exclaimed.

"Your wife!" she insisted hysterically. "The nurse said—" A light of relieved understanding brightened Allen's face; he was almost smiling as he quickly interrupted her.

"So that is the trouble, is it?" he asked rather stiffly. "I remember now that the nurse did call Mrs. Allen my 'wife' at first, but surely you"—his voice softened, but the reproach in his face stung her cruelly—"Natalie, Natalie, she is my young step-mother. My poor, little sweetheart, how could you believe——"

Natalie flung herself on her knees beside him, and, between her sobs, managed to explain how the mistake had occurred.

"Can you ever forgive me?" she ended in such a woe-begone way, that Allen hastened to prove to her, in a distinct, convincing manner, the extent of his magnanimity.

**M. C. Hueston.**

# Your Editor Chats.

You will find the first list of sentences in our great new Competition on page 399. I am sure that the discovering of the hidden names of railway stations will prove both an attractive and instructive amusement for all readers. The Competition is extremely simple, though at the same time a large amount of skill is required in finding the names. The prizes consist of three cash gifts, being £50, £25, and £10 respectively for the first, second, and third prizes. In addition to this twenty-five Gramophones are offered.

I have been led to offer these Gramophones, which are similar to those which have already been given away in other Competitions, owing to the repeated requests of many readers who have so far been unsuccessful in winning instruments, but yet are desirous of obtaining them, they having heard from other prize-winners of the magnificent quality and tone of the instruments. Each Gramophone is accompanied by two records, and is fitted with a Concert Sound-Box, which greatly increases the volume of sound.

If any readers have friends who experience a difficulty in obtaining a copy of this issue of *Short Stories* in order to be able to enter for the Competition, they will find the first list of sentences in *Pearson's Weekly* and *Home Notes*, dated April 2nd, both of which cost one penny, and are on sale on Friday next.

The majority of readers experienced considerable difficulty in deciphering correctly the facsimile of Mr. R. Norman Silver's handwriting which was published in *Short Stories*, dated March 7th. The following is a list of the pencil-case winners, and also a copy of what Mr. Silver wrote:

L. H. Bowden, St. Bulades, Aylestone, Leicester.
A. Bruce, 4 Clarence Road, Handsworth, Birmingham.
E. Canham, 27 Courtney Road, Highbury, N.
F. Hulme, 5 Earl Street, Audenshaw, near Manchester.
W. Rose, 46 Shamrock Street W. Glasgow.
Mr. Ramsay, Maplebank, Leadhills, Abington.
M. Richardson, Lynwood, Egremont, Cumberland.
N. H. Simmons, 43 Milson Road, West Kensington.
J. H. Gainford, 33 Everton Terrace, Liverpool.
J. H. Robertson, 9 Glenogle Road, Edinburgh.

Hans Christian Andersen, that teller of so many simple yet haunting tales, said once that his stories looked over his shoulder. What he meant no doubt was that in every true romance there is something that "comes of itself," some situation, some character that springs up as with a life of its own. Such situations, such characters, come to the author with a little *thrill* that gives him a new interest and a new pleasure in his work.

In "Held Apart" the writer has been fortunate enough to meet with many of these odd sensations. One thrill came to him when he seemed to see the scoundrelly ship's steward, Hartigan, checked in his drunken song by the creaking of a hinge, lolling in his chair and staring with stupid, startled eyes at the blind white girlish face in the doorway. Another came when he heard—as novelists do hear—the cold, hard voice of Hannah Davenal bidding her aristocratic dupe and accomplice, "*Go down to Groudle Tower and look!*" The others—but his readers must discover those for themselves.

He trusts, however, that they may find as much pleasure in reading "Held Apart" as the writing of it has given to

R. Norman Silver.

The result of the "Cats" Competition will be found on page 393.

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# A FLAW IN THE STRUCTURE.

**The Story of a Weakness that Became Strength.**

"I always feel a dreadful bore when I call in at this time of the evening, my dear Maud!" declared Miss Rose Dawson with an easy air, which did not betoken any special amount of compunction. She had already been there for more than half-an-hour. "I know that you are usually in the study with your father, when he is at home in the evening, going over his plans for new ships and all that sort of thing. I hope he is out now, or I may be keeping you from him!"

"You are not a bore at all, Rose!" said Maud Newbold quietly. Her friend's lively chatter amused her, and Rose did not intrude too often. "My father is not out, though; he is in the study with Mr. Arnold Morrison, and they are going into some plans together."

"Mr. Morrison!" cried Rose in mild surprise. "Oh, is he working for your father's firm now? Very clever, people say, and I know he is very good-looking and manly. So you do not have so much of your father's society now, of course—superseded!"

She laughed, not giving Maud time to reply.

"Of course, you've heard about that romance of his? He was looking at some plans or something of that sort"—this was a favourite expression of hers—"when he let the paper fall and the wind caught it.

"Just as the paper was rolling into the water, a girl ran up and caught it with her umbrella, pinning it to the ground. Mr. Morrison came up, recovered his paper, thanked her—and report says that he fell in love with her on the spot!

"I have seen the girl; very nice, almost charming, but she is only a poor milliner or something of that sort, and not quite good enough for him! Lucky for her! Of course I don't mean to say that a milliner is not as good as—— But there, I mustn't turn gossip!"

Maud had not heard it all; she was sitting in her chair with tightly clasped hands and in the attitude of one who is about to spring to her feet. Her face wore a tense expression, but this could not be seen by Rose as they were sitting in the twilight.

"I wonder, now, how it would be if he met somebody else, more in his own circle?" continued Rose, just a little more thoughtfully. "Would he give her up? The girl, I mean. Her name is Alice Boyce. That is the question!"

Maud did not reply, but the intensity of her expression deepened, till she had the appearance of one who is in pain. Rose fidgeted and went on, somewhat awkwardly:

"I suppose it is rather too bad to discuss the gentleman while he is so close to us! What about the Paynes' ball? You will go, I suppose? And when shall we have the pleasure of seeing you a captive to Cupid?"

"If it were not for the fact that you are so good, if you did not demonstrate the possession of a heart in so many ways, I should be disposed to assert that you do not own one! The efforts of several men to make an impression are sufficient to cause most persons to declare that you have hedged that organ round with the determination to die an old maid!"

Maud's face lost its pallor and became bright with colours. With an effort she forced herself to reply in a steady voice:

"Let us leave my heart to take care of itself, and let us consider the following problem, Rose: Suppose a woman sees a man with whom she falls in love, or with whom she feels that she could fall in love, whichever way you like to put it. The man, however, is engaged, in word if not in fact, to another—girl. Yes, we will call her a girl in order to distinguish her from the woman first mentioned.

"Now, the man has never made love to the woman; there is no deceit on his part, and the woman does not know till after the first fateful meeting, that he is even acquainted with the girl. Yet, although the man has said nothing to the woman, yet she is perfectly sure that if she exerted any power, call it fascination, if you like, the man would leave the girl and come to her."

Maud ceased speaking, although she had not finished her statement of the problem. Rose looked interested.

"Where's the problem?" she asked. "I don't see it yet, but perhaps I am dull to-night."

"What ought the woman to do?" continued Maud. "Ought she to go about her ordinary mode of living and resolutely turn from the man, who is unconsciously tempting her with the greatest happiness that can come to a woman, or ought she to take that happiness? Ought she to sacrifice herself or be happy—leaving the girl to——"

"My dear Maud, I am almost out of patience with you!" cried Rose, in a tone of mild surprise. "I thought you were prosaic; I am sure that a girl who mixes in shipbuilding plans with her father ought to be practical! What right has the woman to sacrifice herself?

"If happiness is offered to us mortals, we are bound to accept it! The fact that someone else has to suffer because we do it, is not our concern. *That* is her, or his, concern!"

"But suppose," began Maud anxiously, while her hands clasped one another still more tightly.

"I don't suppose anything!" declared Rose positively. "It is only in novels that the characters sacrifice themselves; it doesn't cost anything, you see! The author uses up so much ink and paper and brain tissue either way, so it makes no difference! But in real, practical life, it *does* cost something! So you don't sacrifice yourself, you leave that to the one who can't help herself!"

"Listen to me!" requested Maud. Her voice was calm and steady, but she was trembling with suppressed emotion. "The man loves the girl, and will be happy with her unless the woman allows him to—fall into temptation himself.

"The woman has all she requires, all she desires, except the love of that man; but the girl has nothing save that. She is poor, has to work hard for a living; she knows the miseries of genteel poverty, and can only look forward to a life of work. But she has that man's love, and if he could offer her only a workman's lot in life, yet would she feel recompensed for the hardships of life by having that man's love.

"Ought the woman to take that from her? The woman who has all else—ought she to take from the girl the only thing she has to make her happy?"

"I am afraid that problem is being put to me in too poetical a manner!" laughed Rose. "I tell you, Maud, that the whole matter, stripped of the gilt of poetry, comes to this:

"The woman is throwing away a chance of happiness, and she has no right to do so! It is quite conceivable that the man would be more happy with her than with the girl; why, then, should she bring about a double sacrifice? That settles it, my dear Maud!"

She rose to go, and Maud, rising also, switched on the electric light. Rose was busily engaged in setting her hat straight, and rattled on for a moment without noticing her friend.

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"It is quite a treat, notwithstanding your absurd problem, to find you interesting yourself in love matters, Maud. This is very promising, and augurs well for the peace of mind of certain male friends—or of one of them, at least! We shall see developments before long, and—— Good gracious, what's the matter? How white you look!"

"Oh, it's nothing!" exclaimed Maud, with a faint smile. "I have not felt quite well to-day, and my headache is becoming worse, I fear."

"Then it's time I went," decided Rose. "Lie down quietly, my dear, and don't worry your head about problems! No, don't come to the door! Well, if you *will*, you will!"

Maud accompanied her friend to the door, and Rose soon disappeared. Maud Newbold turned and walked slowly back along the hall, but at the end she stopped abruptly, for Arnold Morrison came out of the study and came towards her.

"I hope I have not kept you from your father, Miss Newbold," he observed courteously. "We should doubtless have benefited by your apt suggestions on a difficult matter."

His manner was quiet and unemotional, but the look in his eyes was very keen and penetrating.

For a moment the deep brown eyes of Maud Newbold seemed unable to meet his steadfast gaze, but after the first short faltering they looked firmly into the blue orbs, through which one could almost read the man's very soul.

"It is very good of you to say that, Mr. Morrison," she replied, with her usual gracious manner. Her winning smile, the faintest trace of which was upon her lips now, had a fascination for him, and he wondered why it was so near the vanishing point. "What is the subject now?"

"It would appear to most people to be a trivial matter, Miss Newbold," he responded, "but you, who know as much about these matters as many trained men, will understand that it is more than a trifle. We have discovered a flaw. A small flaw, scarcely noticeable; but you understand that ever so small a flaw spoils the whole construction. We must alter all our plans; it means a loss of money and time, but it cannot be helped. Do you not agree with me?"

"Oh, dear! It seems so unfair to hold that a little defect spoils the whole of a beautiful structure!" she said in a tone of concern. "Can nothing be done, but to pull apart and begin again?"

"Nothing, I fear, Miss Newbold! If a construction, a machine, an organism, a character even, has a weak spot, it spoils the whole. Is that not true, or do you think——"

There was almost a pleading accent in his voice; he appeared to be stating a positive fact, and yet pleading to be told that he was incorrect in his theory. What did he mean by including the character of a human being in his category?

He had turned his eyes from hers while speaking, and her heart beat violently. Was the theory true? She felt that it was, and yet she tried to think otherwise, as he was endeavouring to do! Her heart cried out against this harsh dictum.

"Oh, that is too severe a judgment, Mr. Morrison! Does it follow of necessity that a flaw, a weak spot, mars the whole? No, no; I cannot think it!"

She clasped her hands tightly. He turned his eyes slowly to hers, and in them she read the application of his stern remark to himself. She read what he could not say, for he was bound to another.

His allegiance was due to Alice Boyce, but there was a weak spot in it—only just a speck of disaffection, but that little flaw spoilt the purity of the allegiance and marred the structure of the engagement. He knew it, but he was pleading to be told that he was wrong!

And Maud saw this in his eyes and shut her own, for what was he reading in them? What injustice were they both doing to Alice Boyce? Was there not a flaw in the structure of her own womanly character and integrity in permitting this feeling to linger in her heart? She was aroused from her soul-piercing meditation by the sound of his voice.

"Yes; all that I have said is true, although I would that it were not! I see that you agree with me. Good-night, Miss Newbold!"

She felt his hand touch hers, and he was gone.

She looked about as if in search of him, then groped her way to the drawing-room, for her eyes were filling with tears and she could see nothing. Throwing herself on a couch, she covered her face with her hands and moaned in the agony of her stricken heart:

"No, no! It is not so; it is all theory! Arnold, Arnold, my love! I cannot give you up!"

"Why, whatever is the matter, my dear child?" inquired her anxious father, entering the drawing-room half an hour later. "You look ill, and I believe you've been crying! Headache? Don't have it so bad as that very often, do you?

"I think you haven't been looking so well just lately, and I have a good mind to send you to Italy or Egypt for the winter! Your aunt thinks of going to one place or the other and you could go with her, you see. Don't wish to go? Well, well! Never mind about that just now. Go to your room and bathe your head. Your poor mother used to have dreadful headaches at times."

Maud was glad to escape from her father's eyes. He looked after her and sighed.

"She has been studying too hard!" he mused. "She must have put in a lot of study to get the grip of the thing as she has done. She seemed to go in for it more than ever after that first visit of Morrison's! My word, wasn't he surprised to find a girl knowing so much! I shan't forget that in a hurry!

"He was inclined to treat her like a know-nothing at first, just bowing to her and taking no further notice. But I could see the look of utter surprise when she put in one of her shrewd suggestions! It was as good as a play to watch them! After that, she studied harder than ever, and he always seemed to be waiting to hear what she had to say." He chuckled with amusement.

"I've wondered, occasionally, if I should be told that Morrison wanted to be my son-in-law. Hum. No, I shouldn't mind, although I want Maud to do better. Oh, yes, I forgot! I've heard something about his being engaged! So that's all right. She will be better in the morning!"

* * * * *

On the following day Maud Newbold did more walking about the town than usual; she explained this to her father by saying that her head felt heavy and that out-door exercise might benefit her. Yet there was some other motive—an additional reason for so much walking, if, indeed, it were not the principal one; she appeared to be constantly on the watch.

On the second day she continued the practice; morning, afternoon and evening she went out. It was Saturday, and there were more people about. It was early in the evening; she had made her way towards a piece of land that had been set apart as an open space.

Almost on the edge of the common, as it was called, she passed at the back of a seat on which two girls were sitting, and a remark from one of them brought her to a stand with considerable suddenness.

"You're a lucky girl, Alice Boyce!"

"Yes, I am!" was the reply, uttered in sweetly simple tones. "I am very happy!"

Maud felt rooted to the ground; it was mean to listen, yet she was unable to move.

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"You are going to be taken away from the drudgery of earning your own living and placed——"

"It isn't that!" protested Alice Boyce earnestly. "I should be happy without that, and I sometimes wish that he were more in my own position, because then he might not be tempted to think that he could have done better!

"But I mustn't say that of him!" she added hurriedly, and Maud could see the colour suffusing her cheek as she caught a side glimpse of it. "He is so good, so noble, that he would not be tempted! I can trust him, and I am ashamed of myself for even allowing the thought to come!"

The words were spoken quietly, but to the keen, perceptive faculties of the listener there was a depth of passion in the tone. Maud pressed her hand to her side, as if a sudden pain had estruck her, and moved away, passing in front of her rival.

"I am glad that I have found her at last!" murmured Maud as she walked quickly homewards. "It has made me stronger to see her, and I cannot take from her the one thing she possesses!"

Mr. Newbold was out till nine o'clock, and punctually at that hour Mr. Arnold Morrison arrived and was shown into the study. Maud saw him as he left.

"How has it been arranged?" she asked. "Has the weak spot necessitated the complete undoing of the work or can it be strengthened?"

"In this instance it can be strengthened, Miss Newbold," he answered gravely. He was gazing at her, trying to read her soul. "It is an exception!"

"In human character," she proceeded slowly; "a weakness, if properly dealt with, may be turned into strength and the whole structure is really stronger for it afterwards. It requires the moral fibre to cut out the defective point, or to probe it, and do what is necessary to fortify it; and if that be done, the result in after years is self-esteem. That means more happiness; for, if the weakness has been accepted, and one's conduct shaped accordingly, the result would be shame, the inability to hold one's head erect! It were better to suffer the pain of—sacrifice!—than that of shame!"

"I understand you, Miss Newbold!" he said softly, drawing a deep breath. "You are so good, so good!"

He took her hands in his, clasping them so tightly that he hurt her, carried them to his lips, and let them fall. She heard his steps as he passed out. The sacrifice was made!

The wedding took place within six weeks, and the smiling bride little guessed how near to shipwreck her happiness had been.

Maud Newbold was in Cairo on that day, and her aunt wondered at her niece's absentmindedness. Maud's thoughts were far away; there was a dull pain at her heart which struggled for mastery with a fierce joy—the joy that comes from doing what is right at any cost.

"I did not rob her of it!" she murmured many times. And the thought seemed to cause a gleam of light to illumine the vista of long years of single existence that stretched before her!

**George Day.**


## Liver Complaint, Constipation, and Piles.

### A LEADER OF 50,000 MEN WHO WAS GIVEN UP AS INCURABLE.

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### THIRTY YEARS OF AGONY ENDED.

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But hear his story: "It's quite true, he said to the interviewer who waited upon him. "For the greater part of my career as a leader of Labour I have been handicapped by very serious illness. The cause of my trouble was really liver complaint, and which caused an aching head, a feeling of weight, a dull, aching pain in every limb and an overpowering presentiment that some great calamity was going to happen me.

"These are a few of the feelings I had, and every sufferer from liver trouble will recognise them. Constipation was another source of trouble, and, greatest of all, piles. Oh! the torture of the latter ailment I shall never forget. Doctors? Bless you, I went to one after another, and it was all in vain. I went to the infirmary—no use. I stayed at home and rested—no use. I tried various recipes which friends advised—no use. Years ago a very clever medical man told me that there was no hope for me except by a surgical operation, and at last I underwent the operation. To my horror THIS, TOO, PROVED WITHOUT AVAIL. I was soon suffering again as bad as over.

"Sometimes I was so weak that my arms would actually fall helpless at my sides, my speech seemed to be leaving me, and beads of perspiration stood on my forehead. I dearly loved the work of bettering my fellow men through trade union lines, but at last my illness compelled me to give it up and retire from office. Everything failed to do me good, and I was just waiting for the end.

"One day, as I sat in my chair at the door, Mr. Rudkin, the butcher, coming by, stopped and looked at me. 'Leedham,' he said, 'you'll not live much longer, lad, unless you try the right cure, and that is——bile beans. I've been as bad as a man can be, and they cured me.'

"Then I gave them a trial, and at the end of a few weeks I was feeling some better. The drowsy, heavy, dull feelings were getting less troublesome. I began to have more energy, and the piles began to leave me. This improvement increased, and, to cut a long tale short, in a few weeks I WAS RESTORED TO PERFECT HEALTH."

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# A Shadow Barrier.

**The Story of a Broken Engagement and its Sequel.**

EDITH had always known that David had been engaged before, but his love had been too satisfying, and she had been too happy to think very much about the matter.

When he asked Edith to marry him, David told her of his previous engagement, and there the subject rested. Edith had been proud to be too honourable to question him; indeed, she was not conscious of any desire to do so. She felt no resentment against the other woman, for David's love was too complete to leave any room for jealousy.

But one evening as they sat in the cosy window-seat in the library, watching the sunset colours change and glow, there came to Edith the woman's instinct to probe the heart of the man she loved, and lay bare all its secrets.

"Do you love me, dear?" she began, moving closer, to run her fingers through David's hair.

"Indeed I do, my darling."

"Better than you ever loved before?"

"Yes, dear."

"That other woman—the one you were engaged to first—did you love her?"

"Of course, or I shouldn't have asked her to marry me!"

Edith's hand dropped to her side, and the man took it and held it in a strong clasp.

"It seems odd," mused Edith. "I suppose you sat by her side and held her hand just as you are holding mine now. Did you make the same pretty speeches you do to me, I wonder?"

"Certainly not," replied David gently. "No man ever makes love to two women in quite the same way."

"No, men are too adaptable for that," said Edith, but there was no malice in her voice, and David, glancing at her quickly, saw that she did not realise how deep the truth of her remarks lay.

"Isn't that red sky gorgeous?" he asked after a moment. "In a little while it will be the faintest pink."

"It's wonderful," said Edith. "Do you know, dear, that you never told me which one of you broke that engagement?"

"Didn't I, dear?"

"No," Edith answered, "but don't tell me if you would rather not," she added softly. "Somehow I feel sure that you did."

"Yes," David said, "you are quite right. I broke it."

"I am glad it was you," said Edith quickly, "because it makes me feel sure you have no regrets. I never had any patience with the false notion of honour that prevents a man from breaking an engagement. I don't see how it can be honourable to marry a woman when you do not love her."

As she spoke Edith looked at her lover to see whether he shared her opinion. His face, with the glory of the sunset full upon it, was very sober.

He did not speak for some time, and Edith waited, knowing he would soon tell her what was in his mind.

"I did not break my engagement because I had ceased to care," he said finally, "but the woman I was to marry did me a great wrong, and I lost faith in her. I could not marry a woman I did not trust, so I released her. I think it right to tell you this, dear."

"And then," said Edith softly, "you ceased to care?"

"Yes, dear, I ceased to care. Not all at once, but gradually. There, now the sky is pink, a pink that would just become you. Don't you wish I were equipped with wings so I could fly up and get you a piece of that cloud for a ball dress?"

"Was it before you met me or afterwards that you ceased to care?" Edith asked.

"I hardly know. It was before, I think, that I stopped caring, but it took you to restore my lost faith in womanhood."

"And I made you forget?" Edith's voice grew tender.

"Yes, dear, you made me forget," said David in the same tone. "See, how fast the pink is fading!" he continued. "It is just as well I could not get you that ball dress, I think. I am afraid the colour wouldn't wash."

Once Edith would have retorted gaily that people didn't wash ball-dresses, but now she gave his hand a tiny pressure and said:

"It must have hurt you dreadfully to be treated so. Are you sure the hurt is all gone?"

David returned the pressure, but he did not speak at once. Edith looked up at him, but the light was growing dim, and she could scarcely see his face.

"It still hurts a little, dear," he said slowly, "not because I have any regrets, but I feel a resentment because of the way I was treated. I shall get over even that in time, but now it makes me angry to think of it. I love you dearly—better than I ever thought I could love anyone, but a blighted trust must always leave a scar, I suppose."

"Poor darling!" Edith's free hand went to David's head and ran lingeringly through his curls and across his forehead. With a caressing motion her fingers touched first his cheeks and then his eyes.

Suddenly she felt something wet against her hand. Her body grew tense, and her arm dropped to her side as though she had been stung.

David had said that the other woman was nothing to him now, but—that tear in his eye! Slowly Edith drew her hand from his clasp, but he did not seem to notice. Presently she shivered, and he felt the motion.

"What is the matter, dear?" he said. "Are you cold? Shall I close the window? See, the pink is only a dull grey now."

"No, I am not cold," said Edith wearily. All the brightness seemed to have gone out of her life; it had changed from gorgeous crimson to a dull grey while the sunset faded. Her

**(Concluded on page 412.)**

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# ASTHMA

**WHY ??** is it generally thought that there is no cure for **ASTHMA,**

**CHRONIC BRONCHITIS,**
**SHORTNESS OF BREATH, EMPHYSEMA, BLOOD-SPITTING, HAY FEVER,** and other Lung Complaints.

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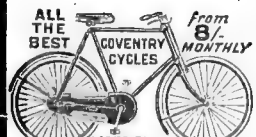


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heart ached, and her head throbbed. She wanted to be alone —to think it over.

"I have a headache, dear," she said aloud. "I think, if you will excuse me, I will go to bed. Perhaps it will be better by morning."

"I hope so, darling," answered her lover, adding in a whisper, "I am sorry. I'll go now," he continued, "and to-morrow I'll come and take you for a drive."

"Thank you, dear," said Edith, but the face she lifted to his was unresponsive to his kiss.

"Why, your hands are cold!" cried David. "How thoughtless I was to let you sit so long beside that open window! These evenings are cool. But I was watching the sunset, and did not think."

Edith sighed. It was not the sunset that made him forget, she thought.

All night Edith lay awake, staring into darkness. When daylight came she got up and wrote the following letter to her lover—

"Dear David,—*I am sorry, I did not mean to hurt you last night. I did not suppose it could hurt you to talk of her. But it did, dear, and so, although you do not know it, you must care for her still. If you did not love her, the thought of her could not bring tears to your eyes.*

"*I am going to break our engagement, dear, for I love you too well to have even a memory between us. Ah, you don't know how it hurt me when I saw that you did not want to talk of her. Had I shown tact I would have changed the subject, but I could not do that.*

"*And I should always be wanting to talk of her to see if it hurt you.*

"*It will be easier to endure the agony of separation than to go through life with this awful ache in my heart, and feeling that I have not the power to heal a hurt that anyone else cow'd cause you.*

"*Do not try to see me, dear, you cannot alter my decision and you will only make things harder for me. To think of you is almost more than I can bear, and yet I must go on thinking of you always. Good-bye, dear, and God bless you.* Edith."

After this letter was sent, Edith took up her life as if it were something that must be got through somehow. A week passed without bringing any sign from David, but on the eighth day a letter came. Edith clutched it to her heart with a fierce eagerness. She had not known how hard it would be to let him go out of her life. Trembling she broke the seal and read the letter.

"My Dear Child,—*I shall not try to tell you how your letter hurt me, but it was a hurt far worse than the hurt of the other night, the one that caused you to write it.*

"*I am not going to plead with you, dear. I am a proud man, and I could not do that, but I am going to ask you to alter your decision.*

"*I hardly know how to write what I wish to, dear; how to tell you what I want you to know. There can be nothing between us, not even a memory.*

"*Once I loved that other woman, I believed her everything that was good and womanly, and when my confidence in her was shaken, I thought that I never could trust anyone again. I believed at the time that it was the depth of my love that made me suffer so, but now I know it was because my trust had been betrayed. I mourned, not the woman herself, but the ideal she had shattered. That is why it still hurts me to talk of her, although she is nothing to me now.*

"*It was you, dear, who brought back my faith in human nature, my trust in woman; and your power to do this is the best proof that I love you as I have never loved before.*

"*Some people say that a man's first love is his best; if his love lasts and becomes the fuller, rounded love of his later life, it is the best, but each time a man loves he loves against greater odds. His trust has more bitter experiences, more cynicism to battle with. There can be no love that is worthy the name without confidence, and the love that can bring to life a dead faith must be the greatest love.*

"*I do not think you can realise this, dear; you are too young. But try to believe me, and do not send me away from you. I have said that I would not plead with you, but I do plead, dear. You can do what no one has ever been able to do; you can make me forget my pride.*

"*I know how you love me. Your letter told me that, as well as of your pain. I am sorry for the hurt, dear. I understand. But if you send me away now, some day, when you are older, and have learnt the difference between the troubles that are shadows, and the cares that must be faced and fought, you will be very, very lonely.*

"*Better the joy of love, dear, than the pain of loneliness.*

"*The messenger is to wait for an answer. Will you say, 'Come?'*

"David."

"Cry away, dear, it will do you good," said David, an hour later. Edith had said "Come," but on seeing him she had burst into a passion of tears. The sudden release from the tension of the past week was too much for her self-control.

"I don't know why I am crying, I am sure," she said, "for I am glad—oh, so glad! I found out that I could not live without you."

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## Will Deafness afflict half the next Generation?

A startling report on deafness has reached the public press through a prominent London Medical Journal, which publishes an official record of tests of the hearing of school children. These tests show that more than one-half of the children examined were deaf to some degree, and also that, unfortunately, there was a very large proportion where deafness had not previously been recognised. This tendency to overlook a slight defect in the hearing is, without doubt, the reason why the offices of Aurists and our special ear hospitals are crowded with people seeking, later in life, a cure for obstinate deafness. On this question the Editor of the "Journal for the Deaf" gives some interesting advice in a series of articles on "Prevention of Deafness," "Tests of Hearing," and "Cure of Deafness." In the latter paper are discussed the various kinds of treatment. Among these is mentioned the Method adopted by the Drouet Institute, consisting chiefly of an external application, which has succeeded in curing many apparently incurable forms of deafness. The "Journal" referred to can be obtained free by post by addressing the Secretary, Drouet Institute, 10 Marble Arch, London, W. With the Journal will be sent a Report Form, by means of which anyone can obtain free advice as to the treatment of deafness, and Ear, Nose and Throat Diseases. The Editor, however, advises patients, whenever possible, to attend the Institute for a personal examination.


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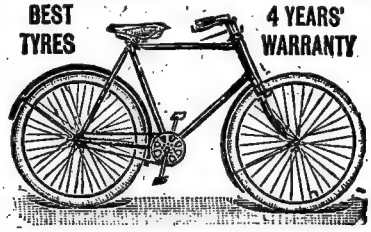

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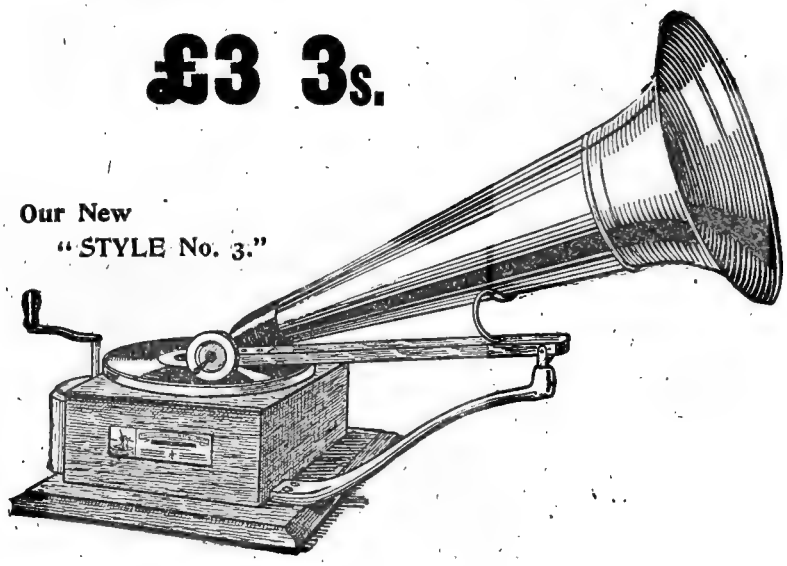

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## Putting it Kindly.

This is a delicate way of putting it, isn't it? "My dear," he said to his wife at table, "I begin to think there are a few misprints in your cookery book."

## Little Things Tell.

The Curate: "You should always be particular about details, Miss Tucker. It is little things that tell." Nellie: "I know that. I have three small sisters."

## He Was Forgiven.

Culprit (in confusion): "I beg pardon! but really I couldn't help it—you looked so roguish and tempting." She: "Are you sorry?" Culprit: "No, I'm not. She: "Then I'll forgive you."

## A Smart Husband.

Daughter: "Did you find out what it was that papa cut out of the paper?" Mother: "Yes, I bought another copy. I've read it all through, but I can't see anything wrong with it. It's an article on the healthfulness of housework."

## Reason for Extravagance.

Friend: "I can't help wondering why a man on your small salary should give his affianced a cluster diamond engagement ring." Mr. Smartchapp: "That's so she won't slip it off and leave it upstairs when the other fellows call."

## Saved the Dentist's Fee.

Mother: "Why, Johnnie, what on earth have you been doing?" Johnnie: "Fight'n! And you owe me half-a-crown on it. You know that tooth you was going to pay a dentist to draw?" "Yes." "Well, Billy Biffer knocked it out."

## Why He Ate It.

Young Wife: "Dear, why are you eating so much more of my cake than usual to-night? Is it nicer than it was the last time?" Young Husband: "I—my darling—I—well, to tell the truth, I bet Tobble five shillings that I weighed more than he did, and we are going to settle it to-night."

## Her Father's Hobby.

Adorer (anxious to please the old gentleman): "Has your father any hobby?" Sweet Girl: "Yes, he has, and it's such a funny one. It's dogs." Adorer (delighted): "I am somewhat of a dog fancier myself. Which is his favourite breed?" Sweet Girl: "It changes constantly. Every time I'm a year older he gets a bigger dog."

## A Lover's Embarrassment.

"And when was it?" she asked tenderly, "that you made up your mind to propose?" He blushed and faltered, and tried to say that it was on a summer night, when she looked radiantly beautiful in the pale moonlight. As a matter of fact, it was one morning when the boarding-house coffee was exceptionally weak; but how could he tell her that?

## One of Her Ways.

He "What is Miss Woolson getting that twenty-guinea costume for?" She: "To wear at a charity bazaar; admission sixpence."

## Her Ideal.

Ada: "No, Priscilla will never marry unless she find her ideal." Ida: "What sort of a man is her ideal?" Ada: "A man who will propose."

## She Liked Mystery.

He: "How fearfully and wonderfully we are made! Think even of my arms, what a mystery they are!" She: "Yes, but it's nice to be enveloped in mystery."

## Excessive Politeness.

Sweet Seventeen (to her partner): "So I trod on your toe, Mr. Briggs?" Briggs (excessively polite): "Not at all, not at all, I assure you! Pardon me for having a toe."

## A Severe Test.

"Promise me that you will be true to me while I am away," said a youth to the object of his affections. She: "I promise, but don't make me break my word by staying away three or four days."

## Gave His Consent.

She: (anxiously): "Have you asked papa, Reginald?" He: "Yes." She (nervously): "What did he say?" He: "He didn't say anything; but I know he gave his consent, for he looked at me in a pitying sort of way, don't you know."

## Insult to Injury.

Bertha: "What! That horrid little Alec Sandiman had the impudence to make you an offer? What next?" Alice: "But that wasn't the worst of it, my dear. The nasty little wretch didn't put a stamp on the letter, and I had to pay twopence for it!"

## He Meant Business.

Mother: "Mary, that young Spinner has been paying a great deal of attention to you of late. Do you think he means business?" Mary (with a far-away look): "I am afraid he does, mother. He is an agent for a bicycle firm, and he has done nothing but try to sell me a machine ever since he has been coming here."

## A Fable.

A young lady was once noticed by her mother to be fondling and kissing a pet kitten. "Why, Mary," said the mother, "you have kissed that kitten more in five minutes than you have me in five years." "Don't you know why I'd rather kiss the kitten than you, mother?" "No, my child." "You haven't got whiskers."

## His Place in the Picture.

Mr. Mashemall: "By Jove, Miss Prettypert, I wish you'd put me into your picture." Miss Prettypert: "I will, if you sit where I ask you to." Mr. Mashemall: "Oh, delighted, by Jove! Where shall I sit?" Miss Prettypert: "On that rock in the background. Make haste!" (N.B.—"That rock" is five miles away.)

## Buying Him Off.

Mr. Billion: "You shall never marry my daughter, sir." Impassioned Suitor: "Your threats do not frighten me. I'll marry her or die! When I once love, sir, no power on earth can——" Mr. Billion: "Oh, I'm not proposing to use force. How much cash will it take to buy you off?" Impassioned Suitor: "Um—er—how much'll you give?"

## Mere Force of Habit.

Distinguished Foreigner: "I think the voices of English girls very sweet, but they would be still more musical if conversation were carried on in a lower tone." London Belle: "We make a good deal of noise; but you must remember our favourite amusement is concert-going, and one gets in the habit of loud talking, trying to make one's voice heard above the music, you know."

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Conducted by CYNTHIA.

[*In this page are answered any letters from readers dealing with affairs of the heart, tangles in domestic life, or points of etiquette. All communications must be addressed to Miss Cynthia Hamilton, c/o the Editor of* SHORT STORIES.]

### *Love Versus Art.*

"PETERSBURG" is in love with a young lady who has a great talent for Art, and apparently has a promising career before her. He thinks that the young lady returns his affection, but has not asked her yet. As "PETERSBURG" himself has no talent for Art, he is afraid to ask his lady-love to share his lot, being afraid that, having no sympathy with her work, he might spoil her career. He is on good terms with her parents, but knows that they would be very much against such a union with their daughter.

* * * * *

I don't see that the fact of your not being in sympathy with your lady friend on the question of Art, "PETERSBURG," should prohibit a declaration of love. It is often the case that persons with opposite tastes are most happily married. You surely will be able to find out through a mutual friend, if not in some other way, whether she cares for you or not.

* * * * *

If she really does care for you, and you are able to show her that you can make her happy, I am sure she will not let the Art question be a stumbling-block. Regarding the parents, they are not likely to make a fuss when they see that their daughter is really in love with you; they would not permit you to be on visiting terms had they not some degree of friendship for you.

### *A Soldier's Trouble.*

"XAVIA," who is a soldier, has been engaged to a girl for a few months, and he promised to marry her in November. He now finds that if he marries before the expiration of three years he will forfeit a lot of benefits, which will mean a great deal to him. The girl is slightly his junior, and "XAVIA" wants to know whether he should fulfil the promise made for November or ask the girl to wait.

* * * * *

I should most certainly advise you to wait, "XAVIA." You say you have only known the girl six months in all. That is hardly long enough to get to know whether you are really suited to each other. The lot of a soldier's wife is hard at any time, and think how much harder it will be if the benefits you mention cannot be obtained.

* * * * *

A thing that is worth having is worth waiting for, and, after all, three years will soon pass, and if during that time you find that you have made a mistake in becoming lovers—I imagine from your letter that you are both very young—you will be glad to think that the knot was not already tied.

### *Girl and Boy Friendships.*

"HETTIE B.," who is sixteen, is in great trouble because her mother does not like her to speak in the streets to a number of boys to whom she has been introduced by her girl chums. It does not look very well to see a girl talking in the streets with several boys (or young men, I expect they would prefer to be called), and I think your mother is quite right to raise an objection to it. If you meet them at the houses of friends that is quite a different matter. Mothers generally know best what is good for us, "HETTIE B."

### *Married Women at Business.*

"ONE OF YOUR READERS" has been engaged to a girl for four years, and though he cannot afford to keep her as he would wish, she wants the marriage to take place, and suggests that she should go back to business; and, in fact, tell no one of the marriage except her grandfather, her only relation.

* * * * *

I wonder, "ONE OF YOUR READERS," who your *fiancée* thinks will look after the home while you are both away at business. If it is necessary for a husband and wife to work all day in order to keep the home together they are not likely to be able to afford to keep a servant, and in consequence the home must suffer.

* * * * *

Ask your *fiancée* how she thinks she will like to come home to prepare a meal after a hard day's work. She will find that she simply cannot do it; she will break down utterly. If she wants to get married, and you see no prospect of improving your position for some time, you should consent to marry and then set up an establishment well within your means. Don't conceal the fact that you are married from anyone; it is always an unwise thing to do, and may lead to endless trouble.

### *Etiquette.*

"AT a party should the husband or the wife enter the room first?" asked "D. F.," "also, when should the hostess leave the room after a meal?"

* * * * *

It is usual for the lady to be taken to the hostess' room to disrobe, while her husband waits for her downstairs. When the lady returns, she should enter the room first, followed by her husband. As to the hostess, after a dinner or supper she always leaves the room first—to show the way, as it were—and her guests follow her.

### *Mixed Marriages.*

"MOSSIE," who is British, lives in Cape Colony. He was formerly engaged to a Dutch girl, but owing to his parents' opposition, she gave him up, not wishing to cause ill-feeling in the family, though at the same time persisting that she still loved him. "MOSSIE" will be independent of his parents in a year or so, and he wants to know whether he should give her up absolutely; they are both very unhappy without the other.

* * * * *

The subject of mixed marriages is a difficult one, "MOSSIE." I have known of very happy marriages between Dutch and British, and also the reverse. It is quite possible that your parents' prejudice against the Dutch was caused by the late war, and they will soon forget about it.

* * * * *

I would advise you to wait a year before doing anything definite, and if you are both in the same mind then, try to win over your parents to your way of thinking. If they will not be won I should advise you to marry in the face of their opposition, as, after all, though it is much more agreeable when parents are fond of their daughters-in-law, such a state of things is not absolutely essential, and Time heals many wounds.

*Cynthia*

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